

Julius Gathogo

MUTIRA MISSION

**An African Church Comes of Age in
Kirinyaga, Kenya
(1912-2012)**



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MUTIRA MISSION

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AN AFRICAN CHURCH COMES OF AGE IN
KIRINYAGA, KENYA, 1912 -2012

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Zapf Chancery
Limuru, Kenya

First Published 2011

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Cover Concept and Design

C. B. Peter

Associate Designer and Typesetter

Nancy Njeri

Copyediting

C. B. Peter

Editor and Publishing Consultant

C. B. Peter

Printed by

Kijabe Printing Press,

P. O. Box 40,

Kijabe.

Published by



Zapf Chancery Publishers Africa Ltd,

C/O St. Paul's University

P. O. Box Private Bag,

Limuru - 00217, Kenya.

Email: zapfchancerykenya@yahoo.co.uk

Mobile: 0721-222 311

ISBN 978-9966-1506-8-4

*This book has been printed on fully
recyclable, environment-friendly paper.*

To The Rev. Dr. Canon Moses Mwangi Njoroge

One of the most celebrated sons of the old Mutira Pastorate.

Your role as the Principal of St. Andrews College of Theology & Development, Kabare, (1991 to date), upon graduating with a Masters degree from Canada and later a Doctorate from USA, is a big honour for our community. It confirms that the missionary labour at Mutira was not in vain. Your life is inspirational.

And to Hon. Rev. Mutava Musyimi

Another celebrated son of the old Mutira Pastorate; being the first Mutiran to become the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) and later the Member of Parliament (MP) for Gachoka (2007- to date). It is a great honour to us all. It reminds us of your father, lay leader Stephen Kisilu of Kiandangae, Gategi and Riakanau parishes, who was made an Anglican lay reader in Mutira Mission Centre, a reality that attests to the fact that a good tree will always bear a good fruit.

Acknowledgements

For the last ten years, I have laboured to establish how best I can honour my local people of my Mutira village in Kirinyaga County, Central Kenya, in East Africa, where I was born and brought up some years after Kenya's independence. The impetus for researching and publishing this book has been presented by the first centenary celebration of the establishment of Christianity in the locality (1912-2012). Thus, this is a dream come true for me - as it will document critical historical facts about Mutira, the Ndia people, Kirinyaga County and Kenya and Africa in general.

I appreciate the mutual support of my colleagues at Kenyatta University who 'understood' what I was doing and thereby gave me the necessary support. In particular, my comrade-in-arms, Patrick Egondi, deserves a pat on the back for standing in solidarity with me as I wrestled with this project in our University office. Together, I hope, we shall make at least a footnote in history.

Prof. Isabel Phiri and Prof. Jesse Mugambi, my long time mentors deserve a special place for their critical roles in shaping me academically. Dr. Moses Mwangi Njoroge, the Principal of St. Andrews' College of Theology and Development, Kabare, deserves my salutations, as he allowed me to access important materials in their Library. Hats off to Prof. Marion Mutugi for her excellent and intuitive editorial work; and indeed the much needed moral support. For his insightful and perceptive advice, after going through the book, when it was in manuscript form, Prof Mugambi deserves my warm

salute. My immediate family members: Jedidah, Angela and Audrey, deserve my compliments for their understanding as I interrupted their sleep in the course of working towards the publication of this book. If the historical insights in this book stimulate reflection and action regarding the church, it will be a clear prove that these labours were not in vain.

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Introduction

Centenary Theme: “Your Word is a Lamp to My Feet”

The completion of this book confirms Mutira Centenary (1912 to 2012) theme in Psalms 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path.” Literally, God’s word is likened to a candle which may be held in the hand to give us light in every dark place and chamber; and it is a general light shining upon all his works, and upon all our ways. In attempting to exegete the text, we realise that the verse speaks about three important components that have sustained African Christianity both in the 20th and 21st centuries. That is, the lamp, the feet and the light. All of them are repeatedly mentioned in the Bible. Through the Gospel which, in my view, is synonymous to lamp, the European missionaries were inspired to come to Africa, Mutira in particular, to spread Christianity, as they introduced western education.

By the same lamp, Africans were able to see the truth of the Gospel; and hence proceeded from there. In particular, after the first three European clergy, (refer to Rev. Brandon Laight 1912-1918, Rev. Herbert Butcher 1919-1926, Rev. Hillard 1927-1928), Mutira Pastorate which covered the whole of the then Ndia Division (of Kirinyaga County) and the Western part of Mbere land (of Embu County), was left without any European missionary after the infamous 1928 earthquake. In other words, after the departure of Rev. Hillard in 1928, no European missionary was ever sent to Mutira as priest-in-charge, though some critical services such as conducting

weddings, baptisms and acceptance of people to the Anglican Church were constantly done by visiting European clergy from the neighbouring Kabare and Kigari missionary centres. In other words, lay Christian leaders proceeded from where Laight, Butcher and Hillard had reached. It is surprising to note that the Mutira Mission, as record in the Kenya National Archive shows, was closed in 1929. This goes against the established reality that with or without the direct European missionary tutelage, Mutira Mission continued under African leadership who constantly consulted the European clergy from the neighbouring centres. Special mention goes to Thomas Meero, an African from Taveta, who had joined Rev McGregor's missionary team in as early as 1900. As McGregor's team opened various centres in Central Kenya, Meero was always with them. He came to settle as an Evangelist at Mutira in 1915 and died in 1964, having achieved a lot for Mutira. The second African church leader who attempted to reshape Mutira pastorate is Johana Njumbi, he was later ordained as a clergy and subsequently posted to Mutira in 1934 and served till his retirement in 1952.

To this end, the word became the light that shone on all people; who in turn walked in the bright path of the Gospel, from 1912 to 2012. With the lamp, feet, and light, people have everything that makes them Christians. In other words, feet symbolises a walk towards God of Christendom or conversion to Christianity; the lamp symbolises the church of Christ; and light symbolises the new way, the new religio-social paradigm. With the lamp (the church) and the feet (new religion – read Christianity); and the light (referring to the new socio-religious paradigm – where evangelism, education and modern medicine went hand-in-hand) – no one had an excuse of rejecting that which had come to transform the society for the better. One hundred years of missionary Christianity in Mutira and the larger Kirinyaga (1912-2012) is not in vain. For true to the Psalmist, God's word became the lamp (worshipping church), the feet (enabler of conversions), and the new light which shone holistically hence better

to everyone. God's light shone to all department's of life so fully that Jesus' working manifesto became real (Luke 4:16-18), thus:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

Thus, God's Word is a lamp, a light that illuminates the darkness. If a person walks through the woods at night, s/he is well served to have a flashlight with him/her to shine it on the ground in front of him/her so that his/her feet do not trip over a hurdle in the path, or his/her shins do not encounter a fallen log. That is what light does; it lights up thereby enabling us to go through the vicissitudes of life successfully. Mutira mission and Africa of the 21st century has reached thus far through the flashlight of God.

Clearly, God's Word illuminates the path of our lives. If we keep God's Word shining along the way, then we will be far less likely to trip. We will not be easily deceived. Because we are following the light, we will see what the light reveals in the path ahead of us. It is only when we turn the light off (before we have actually arrived at our destination) that something could spring up in the dark and trip us. Therefore, if we keep the light of God's truth shining brightly ahead of us, then we have a greater chance of avoiding deception or any confusion whatsoever. As we flashback the past one hundred years of Christianity in Mutira pastorate and the larger Kirinyaga, in central Kenya, we need to re-assess whether we are tripping or walking to the promised land of success. In following the footsteps, of the missionaries, how many churches, schools, dispensaries and hospitals have we brought forth? What quality of Christianity do we profess? Is it the version of Christianity that thrives on destruction or progress? If we have the lamp, feet and light, then our path ought to be smooth.

If “thy word is a lamp unto [our] feet,” then it automatically follows that Christians, as subscribers to the word of God, are naturally walkers through the cities, towns, avenues, and streets of this world, and we are often called to go out into its darkness – as the 19th & 20th century European missionaries left the comforts of their respective homelands to come to Africa and eventually became co-workers with God in the dark and desolate vineyards of Africa. The verse cautions us to avoid venturing into the dark without the light-giving word, lest we slip with our feet. Each person is called upon to use the word of God personally, practically, and habitually, that he/she may see God’s way and see what lies in it. Undoubtedly, when darkness had settled down upon all around us, the word of the Lord, like a flaming torch, revealed our way out; hence the reason why we are there today.

No Fixed Lamps Then!

Historically, the passengers in the Ancient Near East, who had no fixed lamps, carried a lantern with them so as to avoid falling into the open sewer, or stumbling over the heaps of ordure which defiled the road. This is comparable to our contemporary paths that we pass through - in this dark world. Thanks be to God, the Psalmist tells us that we would not have known the way, or how we could have walked through in the last one hundred years of missionary Christianity in Kirinyaga, if the Scripture, like a blazing flambeau, did not reveal it. One of the most practical benefits of the Bible is guidance in the acts of daily life; it is not sent to astound us with its brilliance, but to guide us by its instruction. It is true the head needs illumination, but even more the feet need direction, else head and feet may both fall into a ditch. Blessed is the person who appropriates God’s word, and practically uses it as his or her comfort and counsellor, - a lamp to his or her own feet; “And a light unto my path.” It is a lamp by night, a light by day, and joy at all times.

The Biblical David

The biblical David guided his own steps by it, and also saw the difficulties of his road by its beams. He who walks in darkness is sure, sooner or later, to stumble; while he who walks by the light of day, or by the lamp of night, stumbleth not, but keeps his or her uprightness. Ignorance is painful upon practical subjects; it breeds indecision and suspense, and these are uncomfortable: the word of God, by imparting heavenly knowledge, leads to decision, and when that is followed by determined resolution, as in this case, it brings with it great relaxation of heart. Despite the challenges that the last one hundred years has experienced (1912-2012), the word of God has been the lamp to our feet, and a light for our paths.

The question is: Are we ready to make another critical step forward? Are we ready to travel together, fully knowing that we are children of one mother, one father? If the African society has come of age without outside tutelage, then, we must be decisive in managing our affairs responsibly.

Mutira Mission

CHAPTER ONE

Kirinyaga County

Introduction

Mutira Mission Centre is situated in Kirinyaga County,¹ Kirinyaga Central District, Mutira location. In turn, Kirinyaga County has five administrative Districts: Kirinyaga Central, Kirinyaga West, Kirinyaga North, Kirinyaga South and Kirinyaga East. Kirinyaga County covers a total area of 1.478 km² and lies between latitudes 0°1° and °40° South and Longitudes 37° and 38° East. It is situated in the eastern side of the former Central Province; and her neighbouring Counties include: Embu on the eastern side; Nyeri and Murang'a on its Western side; and Mt. Kenya forest on its Northern side. Like her neighbouring Embu County, Kirinyaga is situated in the Southern slopes of Mt. Kenya, the highest mountain in Kenya, and the second largest in

¹Following the August 4, 2010 national referendum and subsequent promulgation of the new constitution, Kenya, which was previously made of eight provinces (Central, Eastern, Western, Nyanza, North Eastern, Coast, Rift Valley and Nairobi), was now sub-divided into 47 counties. That is, Kirinyaga, Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, Tana River, Lamu, Taita/Taveta, Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, Marsabit, Isiolo, Meru, Tharaka-Nithi, Embu, Kitui, Machakos, Makueni, Nyandarua, Nyeri, Murang'a, Kiambu, Turkana, West Pokot, Samburu, Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu, Elgeyo/Marakwet, Nandi, Baringo, Laikipia, Nakuru, Narok, Kajiado, Kericho, Bomet, Kakamega, Vihiga, Bungoma, Busia, Siaya, Kisumu, Homa Bay, Migori, Kisii, Nyamira and Nairobi City.

Africa. The upper parts of the county receive abundant rainfall (over 63" per annum) and have fertile volcanic soil. In this section, tea and coffee are grown as cash crops. In the lower "star grass" (referring to agro ecological) zone (middle zone), maize and beans grow well and dairy cattle are kept. In the "lower down", the Mwea plains, which were once dry wastelands, booming horticultural activities are currently the order of the day. The change from mere dry wastelands came about as a result of an irrigation scheme that tapped water from rivers Nyamindi, Thiba and Rupingazi. These rivers drain their water to Tana River, which is the largest river in Kenya. Apart from French Beans, Onions, Tomatoes, Maize, Beans, Bananas, Peas and Cotton, 75% of Kenya's rice is grown in this area. Additionally, herds of cattle and goats are also kept. Despite favourable environment for agriculture, farming is limited to small-scale production, where each peasant has an average of 2 acres of land, with a few exceptions. Mutira is located in the present day Kirinyaga Central District.

Climate and Agriculture

As Jean Davison notes, Kirinyaga County is agriculturally productive because of its rich volcanic soil, a sufficient water supply, and favourable climate.² As noted above, this volcanic soil is conducive to the growing of coffee and tea. Characteristically, there are two seasons for rain: *mbura ya njahi* (the pigeon pea rains or Long Rains) falling between March and June and *mbura ya mwere* (the millet rains or Short Rains) between October and early December. Nevertheless, there are variations in rainfall, probably as a part of global warming. In particular, Kenya in 1984 experienced *ngaragu ya kathirikari* (semi-government hunger and famine). In turn, *kathirikari* refers to the yellow maize eaten at this time that was issued by the government after a massive drought, as long rains

²Jean Davison, *Voices from Mutira: Change in the Lives of Rural Gikuyu Women, 1910-1995* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 24.

failed to fall. Conversely, 1941, 1961, 1997, and 2001 experienced massive and erratic heavy down pour (*mbura ya maburiko*) note El Nino that badly destroyed the infrastructures.

Kirinyaga County is located between 1 and 08 degrees south of the equator. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics of Kenya, Kirinyaga County (then a District) had an average population density in 1990 at 312 people per square kilometre. The primary ethnic group is the Kikuyu (also called Gikuyu). In 1981, a combination of Mutira and Kanyeki-ini locations, which formed the old Mutira location, had 62,781 females and 57,603 males. Statistically, this shows that the number of women is larger than that of men. This trend is prevalent even in the twenty-first century. Why? Immigrant labor also played a role. While the answer could simply be described as a mere act of God, it is imperative to appreciate the recklessness of a boy-child which could easily lead to early deaths. In particular, the careless consumption of the local brew has an adverse effect on the boy-child, then an adult. Can something be done to the boy-child who, in the twenty-first century is the endangered species, in Mutira and its surroundings?

Corruption as a Challenge

Like in the rest of the tropical Africa, complaints about corruption and other forms of misuse of public resources is rampant as reported from time to time. In the main, corruption accelerates crime, negatively affects investment, hinders growth in the society, and drains the national or county budget. At the County level it can be seen through the misuse of Constitutional Development Fund (CDF)). In a nutshell, it undermines our sovereignty as a nation, when leaders ignore merit and practise nepotism, and embezzle public funds. Such theft from the nation is always theft from the weakest in the nation: the poor, the old, the disabled, the sick, the children, and the newborn. Overall, corruption does not provide a net profit; rather, it distorts economic development, rewarding the more dishonest rather than the more competent.

A case in point is the visit by Jean Davison, an American scholar, where she was greeted by Tea Protests, as farmers claimed that they were short-changed. She says:

In August 1992 when I visited Mutira, smallholders were striking – refusing to pick their tea – because they realised only Ksh. 2. 50 per kilo, while the final auction price for export tea was Ksh 28 per kilogram. Women wondered who was pocketing the difference and blamed the problem on the management of the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA, a parastatal) [or government owned institution] and the state. In addition there was a bottleneck in the processing of tea leaves, as the outdated equipment in the Kanaita factory was not keeping up with smallholder producers' output. The producers/pickers refused to pick tea over a three-month period (between May and July 1992), which left the once even carpets of green tea looking scruffy and neglected. The conflict between growers and KTDA was resolved in August 1992 with growers earning between Ksh 4 and Ksh 5 per kilogram. The pickers went back to work. However, there was a great backlog at local weighing stations. The way the smallholder producers/pickers perceived the problem was that KTDA was punishing smallholders for the strike by making the pickers wait nearly all night for their tea to be weighed, sorted, and collected for transport to a tea factory. By 1994 when I returned to Mutira the tea fields once again were even carpets of emerald green. Producers were getting roughly Ksh 4.50 per kilo. Women maintained that the opening of the new factory at Kiamaina [called Mununga Tea Factory] in late 1993 had helped to solve the processing bottleneck that was in evidence in 1992.³

At this stage, it is imperative to concede that coffee prices, a cash crop that was once described as the 'black gold,' have fallen in Mutira area and Kirinyaga County in general since 1987. The downward trend in coffee production has also been experienced in the rest of Kenya. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics of Kenya 1991,

³Jean Davison, *Voices from Mutira*: 26.

the overall producer price had been Ksh 3, 844 per one hundred kilograms of coffee in 1984. By 1986, this had risen to a high of Ksh 5, 020 for the same amount. But by 1987, the price had dropped to Ksh 3, 662. In 1988 and 1989, the price went down again to Ksh 3, 636 per hundred kilograms. Comparatively, this was less than it had been in 1984. By 1990, some farmers had already started uprooting coffee; instead, they replaced it with food crops such as Maize, Bananas and French Beans among other crops. This downward trend has continued through to the 2012. One wonders if there is hope for the 'return' of coffee prices which helped parents educate their children in high schools and colleges? during the 1960s, 70s and 80s

The Ndia People

Mutira people are part of the larger Ndia people; a sub-group within the larger Kikuyu Nation of Kenya. They occupy the present day Kirinyaga West and Central districts of Kirinyaga County. In various publications Ndia people are wrongly portrayed as an independent ethnic group - free from the Kikuyu, Embu and/or Meru cousin communities. E. May Crawford, wife of Dr Crawford – a missionary doctor among the Embu, did not appear to appreciate that Ndia are a sub-group of the Kikuyu community. She treats them as a separate but related group to Embu, Chuka, Meru and Kikuyu. In her book, *By The Equator's Snowy Peak: A Record of Medical Missionary Work and Travel in British East Africa*, 1913, she describes Chuka people, a Meru sub-group, thus,

The dialect of these interesting people differs considerably from that of the Kikuyu and Embu tribes, so that it was not always easy to make ourselves understood. The cast of countenance is also somewhat distinctive, with an unusual width between the eyes. Clothing is reduced to a minimum! Goatskins, beads and red clay, all play their part as with most of the barbarous tribes of Africa; but many of the men and women seem to attempt no other covering than a frill of banana leaves round the waist. American cotton and blankets are, however, being gradually introduced amongst the male portion of the community. They appear to be quite devoid of the

scruples of their Kikuyu and Embu neighbours with regard to food, and will eat almost any kind of meat that comes in their way, even that of the hyena, which is reckoned most unclean by the Akikuyu, who consider it ceremonially defiling to touch any meet except beef or mutton, even a domestic fowl or a partridge being absolutely tabooed!⁴

While May Crawford got it right that various communities around the slopes of Mount Kenya have different dialects, she missed the point in portraying Chuka people, who are a sub-group of the larger Meru community, as an independent ethnic group just as Embu and Kikuyu. The same case applies to the Ndia people who are also portrayed as independent from Embu and the Kikuyu. Like Mathira, Tetu, Kabete and other sub-groups of the Kikuyu ethnic group, the Ndia people, despite their accents and dialects, are culturally sons and daughters of the legendary Gikuyu and his wife Mumbi who allegedly founded the Kikuyu community after breaking from other Bantu linguistic groupings. Judging people on account of accents and dialects, as opposed to their cultural settings, is misleading and insufficient. Further, Mrs Crawford describes Chief Gutu wa Kibetu of Gichugu sub-group of Kikuyu community living alongside Ndia people in Kirinyaga County, as “the powerful chief of the Ndia tribe.”⁵ While Njega wa Gioko was ruling Ndia as its paramount chief, from 1901 to 1947, Gutu was the leader of Gichugu people; both sub-groups have dominated Kirinyaga County up to the present moment. While the CMS Mutira is located in Ndia, Kabare Mission – which was established in 1910, is in Gichugu.

Again, my interviews with Reverends Japhet Kathanya and Naftali Mwenda Mburugu, of the greater Meru region, on 29th September 2010, showed that it is utterly impossible that the Chuka

⁴E. May Crawford, *By The Equator's Snowy Peak: A Record of Medical Missionary Work and Travel in British East Africa*, (London: Church Missionary Society, 1913), 142-3.

⁵E. May Crawford, *By The Equator's Snowy Peak*: 150.

ate every kind of meat, including that of the dreaded Hyena, as E. M. Crawford wrote. Why? In those days, the communities living around the slopes of Mount Kenya were not burying the dead; rather, they used to throw the dead bodies to the forest so that the dreaded Hyenas could eat them. This made it the most hated animal among the Meru (Chuka inclusive), Embu, Mbeere, Tharaka, Kikuyu and other Bantu linguistic groups. Generally, African oral narratives are full of Hyena stories; where the Hyena epitomises greed, abomination, stupidity, irrationality and ill-intentioned. To this end, Chuka people could have been likened to Hyena eaters by the rival ethnic group in their locality – who in turn informed Mrs Crawford; and therefore, when she arrived in the present day Kenya in 1904, she ‘bought’ the stereotype from a neighbouring community – a neighbour who competed with the Chukas for the local resources such as the grazing land, the hunting ground among others.

In Godfrey Muriuki’s researches that culminated to an award of a PhD from the University of London, in 1969; and subsequent publication of the book, *A History of the Kikuyu, 1500-1900*, in 1974, he covered Nyeri (*Gaki*) – his homeland, Murang’a (*Metumi*) and Kiambu (*Kabete*). He did not visit Ndia or Kirinyaga County (then Kirinyaga District) in general, to carry out data on the origin of Ndia and Gichugu sub-groups of the larger Kikuyu Nation. Owing to the stereotypes thereof, he could have satisfied himself that, “after all, those other two groups owe their origin from Kamba land, why research on them yet my area of research is concentrated around the Kikuyu community?” He says,

The Maasai were also the neighbours of the Kikuyu to the West.... There were other neighbours besides the Maasai. The country lying to the east of Kikuyuland is inhabited by their cousins – the Meru to the north-east; the Ndia, Gicugu, Mbeere and Embu to the east; and to the south-east, the Kamba with whom the Kikuyu are especially closely related.⁶

⁶Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu, 1500-1900* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1974), 29.

Of course, in wrongly portraying Ndia and Gicugu as the eastern neighbours of the Kikuyu, Prof. Muriuki was only quoting the early European writers, Middleton and Kershaw,⁷ who had a distorted version of the information, just as E. M. Crawford had done with regard to the Chuka sub-group of the Meru Nation. In general, the problem with the early European writers, explorers, missionaries and anthropologists was that they, sometimes, made hasty conclusions about the African people. This was probably due to the communication barriers that were prevalent. In view of this, they classed ethnic groupings by merely listening to the accents and dialects rather than focussing on cultures and genealogies among others. In particular, the Ndia and Gicugu dialects are largely influenced by their cousin neighbours such as Mbeere, Embu, Meru and to an extent Kamba. This does not make them less or more Kikuyu. Like the rest of the Agikuyu, the Ndia people know their genealogies through oral literature which have it that they are sons and daughters of mother Mumbi and father Gikuyu. Like the rest of the Kikuyu, they have nine clans.

Muriuki makes several contradictions when he says,

There is a close parallel between the system of age differentiation among the Ndia and the Kikuyu, as opposed to that of the Meru.... The traditions of the Kikuyu state unequivocally that their clans had already evolved by the time they crossed the Thagana [river Tana] River into Metumi and Gaki.⁸.... it is quite clear that the ancestors of the Tharaka, Cuka, Mbeere, Embu, Ndia, Gicugu and of the Kikuyu migrated from Tigania and Igembe in Meru. This migration was well under way by the middle of the fifteenth century.⁹... Mukurue was Gathanga, the Garden of Eden of the Kikuyu traditions, is likely to have been located at Ithanga, rather

⁷See J. Middleton and G. Kershaw, *The Kikuyu and Kamba, Ethnographic Survey of Africa* (London, 1965).

⁸Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, 45.

⁹Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, 49.

than at Gakuyu near Gathuki-ini in Murang'a. Certainly the physical environment connoted by the word, a place of sand, does not fit the present site around Gakuya. And since the period of evolution of the Kikuyu to become a distinct group had passed by the time they reached the area around Mukurue wa Gathanga, having by then acquired all the basic characteristics of their culture, this presupposes a lengthy period of consolidation *en route*. The fact that they share some features with the Ndia, such as the military sets, in contrast to their other cousins, tends to support this argument.¹⁰.... from the region of Ithanga, the Kikuyu pioneers trekked in small groups towards the West leaving some of their kinsmen *en route* who today form the Gicugu and the Ndia.¹¹...It was the region between the Gura river, to the north, and the North Mathioya river, to the south, that became the secondary nuclear area where the Kikuyu pioneers finally evolved into Kikuyu proper: a distinct group from their closest cousins, the Gicugu and the Ndia.¹²... At the close of the nineteenth century, the Mathira had almost evolved into a sub-tribe....their extensive assimilation of Ndia elements, and the widespread absorption of the Maasai and the Athi, led them to acquire singular characteristics, such as their distinctive dialect, which set them apart from the rest of their kinsmen, even within Gaki district itself. Their emergence as a sub-tribe was only arrested by the arrival of the British, without whose intervention they would have very likely evolved into a sub-tribe such as the Ndia and the Gicugu.¹³.... By the end of the nineteenth century, [Kikuyu clans] were widely dispersed all over the Kikuyu plateau. But despite the long distances involved, the Kikuyu attempted to retain clan/*mbari* solidarity by holding occasional reunions, when kinsmen from Kabete, Metumi, Gaki and even Ndia were expected to be present.¹⁴

¹⁰Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, 58.

¹¹Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, 60.

¹²Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, 63.

¹³Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, 67.

¹⁴Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, 114.

Despite the few contradictions, Prof Muriuki is able to appreciate that beside the clans, the Kikuyu community is divided into various sub-groups; he identifies Mathira, Ndia, Kabete, Gicugu etc as some of them. Thus in my view, classifying Ndia with other communities around the slopes Mt. Kenya, outside Kikuyu community, is a serious error as that is tantamount to attempting to stop some sons and daughters of Mumbi from identifying with their only mother.

The Human Nature of Ndia People

Characteristically, the Ndia people living in Kirinyaga West, Kirinyaga Central and in the western part of Kirinyaga South District are naturally cool, polite, controversy-shy and non-confrontational. A common joke is always made, around the slopes of Mt. Kenya region that, “if you want to marry a taciturn, patient and polished in manners, plus caring partner, visit Ndia.” Over the years, Ndia people have been accused of conservatism, poor time management, lack of aggressiveness in business and general lack of competitiveness. This, in my view, is however a misplaced criticism, if singled on Ndia alone, as this is a common challenge across the vast continent of Africa, and Ndia people, living in Mutira and the rest of Kirinyaga County, are not an exceptional case. The need to address the above challenges is however paramount. With regard to their language, the Ndia accent of Kikuyu borrows heavily from their neighbouring Embu, Nyeri, and Murang’a counties.

Literally, *Ndia* means a dam of water, a reservoir. To the locals, the term Ndia means a bread basket of wealth, a place that is endowed with clean waters, rivers, valleys, hills, never failing rains, good climate and lots of food. To the neighbouring Kamba people *ndia* means foolish. While the detractors of the Ndia people may want to emphasise on the Kamba meaning of the word *ndia*, the reality on the ground shows otherwise. Certainly, no Nation is made of wise or foolish people. As a matter of fact, the Ndia sub-group of the Kikuyu Nation is endowed with lots of quality human and material resources, cash crops, fertile soils that make it a bread basket for her neighbours: the Mbeere and the Kamba among others, who, during the dry seasons

would cross over to Ndia for trade in food and other commodities. To this end, travellers who, in the ancient times, passed through Ndia 'country' did not want to return to their homelands - as they would have entered a "deep dam of agricultural products and general wealth" (*ndia ndiku*). Perhaps, as we forge on with the twenty-first century, one may want to ask, "Is there anything good that can come from Mutira-Ndia?" The simple answer is: "come and see!"

Is There Hope?

Certainly stereotypes about Ndia people includes negatives such as "*andu a kubiba*" (referring to Ndia people as those who prefer to do odd jobs like cleaning toilets in Kenyan cities). As Professor Marion Mutugi avers, this is actually a positive thing as it shows that these people are pragmatic and can do whatever it takes to earn a living. Again, the recent history of technocrats coming from Kirinyaga in general and Ndia in particular is an example of the benefit of this pragmatism that leads them to progression, unlike those who are choosy about work. Certainly, the missionary labours have changed Mutira, Ndia and Kirinyaga in general. And Yes!mThere is hope.

Mutira Mission

CHAPTER TWO

Mutira Anglican Mission (1912-2012)

Introduction

The opening up of Mutira Anglican Missionary Centre in 1911-1912 did not come in isolation. As a matter of fact, the neighbouring Centres had already been operational in as early as 1900. That is, Kabete in 1900, Weithaga in 1904, Kahuhia in 1906, Tumu Tumu 1906 (later taken over by Presbyterians). and Mutira was set to start after Tumu Tumu in 1907-1908. When the Weithaga missionaries under Rev. A. W. McGregor planned to open an out-station and hence build a church at Kithuguya near Sagana in 1907, they met Chief Njega wa Gioko of the Ndia sub-group of the Kikuyu Nation. After careful and lengthy discussions, Njega accepted to allow the establishment of a mission centre within his chiefdom; and in turn, he advised them to go and establish their mission station at Mutira, in the land of the Agaciku clan of Ithimbwi family, as he considered Kithuguya area warm and suitable place for grazing.¹ Subsequently, he sent McGregor's team to his assistant Chief, Ndegwa wa Kimere, to allow them settle at the hill of Mutira, which he called *gacumbirira* or *Njumbi*.

Njega by then wanted to expose the missionaries to the dangers of the wild animals such as Hyenas since Mutira was at the slopes of Mt. Kenya (then called Kirinyaga). In the year 1908, an European missionary named McGregor came to Mutira (Njumbi) from Mbiri District (later Fort Hall and currently called Murang'a) accompanied

¹Joseph Karimi, *Njega Gioko The Ndia Pride* (Karatina: Gakaara Press, 1986), 31.

by some fellow Europeans and two Africans, namely: Paul Kigonde, and Thomas Meero. Upon their arrival, they met lots of resistance from the local Ithimbwi clan of Agaciku clan, who did not want their 15 acres of land to be taken away by the ‘foreigners’ in pursuit of building school (12 acres) and church (3 acres). Following this resistance, the missionaries, under Rev McGregor, left for Kabare and Kigari-Embu and by 1910 established the respective stations.

It was only at the end of 1911 that the deal was settled after land was finally bought by Rev. McGregor from one, Karunditu wa Gitura, at a cost of 30 Rupees (approximately KES 60/= then but today in 2012, about KES 600, 000 OR \$7, 500). The deal was witnessed by his half brother Gacubi. McGregor then placed a placard on a *Muthariti* tree to indicate that the land had already been bought. Interestingly, not much is known about Karunditu wa Gitura for he died soon after. After the 1908 encounter in Mutira, where resistance threatened to permanently stop the missionary work, McGregor proceeded to Kabare and Kigari and bought land for the Mission centre in 1910. As a result, a church was built (Anglican) there by 1912 with the supervision of Rev McGregor. McGregor who had started his mission work in the Taveta area in early 1892 is the one who had also began an Anglican Centre at Kabete on October 13th, 1900.

Rev. McGregor: St Paul of Central Kenya?

Certainly, Rev McGregor can be referred to as the “St Paul of Central and Eastern Kenya,” a church planter who would always plant a church and instal pastors and then move to another place so as to open another. That is the methodology that St Paul applied when starting the churches of Corinth, Galatia, Phillippia, Asia Minor among other places. Likewise, McGregor started churches in Kabete 1900, Weithaga 1904, Kahuhia 1906, Tumu Tumu 1906 and moved to Kithuguya-Sagana in 1907 in the hope of opening another missionary station; reached Mutira in 1908 and started purchase of land discussions under lots of difficulties. He then moved to Kabare with his team which included an African missionary, Thomas Meero, popularly called as ‘Thomasi Bundi’, and established Kabare and

Kigari missions in 1910. As an itinerant preacher, linguist, theologian and an anthropologist, and a skilful negotiator, McGregor visited several parts of Kikuyuland and also made trips among the Maasai. Accordingly, he was received in a very friendly manner though the Kikuyu appeared different from Wataita and Wataveta. He noted that while Wataveta showed great respect for the Europeans, the Kikuyu did not. In particular, the Kikuyu never addressed anyone as Mr... in front of the Person's name. To this end, McGregor noted that "a Kikuyu thinks that he evidently stands as high in the social scale as a white man (sic)."² The main reason for this 'deep' respect for the European is probably because of the fact that the Taita and Taveta people encountered the White missionaries quite earlier. McGregor also noted that in Taveta and other places, "it is very difficult to get the men to sit with women and children, or to open their mouths in church," but for the Kikuyu, "they show no false shame, as they can sit anywhere and anyhow."³

As noted above, after McGregor founded the Kabete Mission Station in 1900, he went to Weithaga and founded Weithaga Station/Centre, in 1904, in the present day Murang'a County. Interestingly, Weithaga is a neighbouring Station to Mutira. As he negotiated with Chief Njega about opening another Station, now among the neighbouring Ndia of the present day Kirinyaga County, McGregor was obviously operating from Weithaga Station – as his working base, thereby making Weithaga the missionary base for the Northern Kikuyu, as opposed to Kabete for the Southern Kikuyus. Of importance to note is that Kithuguya-Sagana is a thirty minutes' drive from Weithaga-Murang'a where McGregor was operating from. This drives us to ask ourselves, why would McGregor of Murang'a cross over to Kithuguya-Sagana, Chief Njega wa Gioko's headquarters, to plead for a plot to plant a church? Wasn't it tantamount to interfering with other administrative Districts, outside

²Paul Mwangi et al, *A Century of God's Household: Diocese of Mt. Kenya South 1900-2000* (Nairobi: Uzima, 2000), 14.

³Paul Mwangi et al, *A Century of God's Household: 14.*

Murang'a, as set out by the then British Protectorate government? In this, it is imperative to consider three points:

First, from 1885 to 1911 Mutira-Ndia and Kirinyaga in general was part of Mbiri (Murang'a) District. From 1912 to 1932 Ndia became part of Nyeri District. Kirinyaga was part of Embu from 1933 to 1963. It was in 1963 that Kirinyaga was made a separate district deriving its name from its nearest mountain to the north; that is, mountain Kirinyaga (Mt. Kenya). When the boundaries of Ndia Division and the Kirinyaga District (now County) were defined in 1963, it was reduced in size by one location. This was Muhito location which became part of Mukurweini Division of the present day Nyeri County. This was done after the death of Chief Njega wa Gioko - the man revered as the Father of the Community of the Ndia sub-group of the Kikuyu Nation. Njega ruled for forty seven years; that is, from 1901 to 1948 when he died.

Secondly, with Chief Karuri wa Gakure of Weithaga location of Murang'a, having seen the "white magic" in Kabete 1900, with regard to education, and subsequently invited McGregor in 1901 to come and start a school in his village in Tuthu, McGregor had learnt to work with Chiefs, or communal leaders - as Africa is a socialist society where converting a King is tantamount to changing the whole kingdom.

Third, McGregor was in the habit of building houses (made of wattle and mud) for his successor-Clergy rather than leaving them fed for themselves, even when he knew he was going for a transfer. For example, before McGregor left Kabete, after three years, to take the assignment of the so-called Kenya Mission, referring to the area that comprised Murang'a, Nyeri, and the Trans-Tana Embu Districts, he engaged in building his own house and building a house for Rev. H. Leakey (nicknamed *Giteru*) and family. The Leakey's were to join him later; and they served Kabete from 1902 to 1930.⁴

Brandon Laight Becomes the First Clergy at Mutira

In view of this, the Church building that was constructed under McGregor's supervision in Mutira (1911-1912) Anglican Mission

⁴Paul Mwangi et al, *A Century of God's Household*: 15.

Centre, also served as a school with the first European teacher/missionary, Rev. Laight, who was nicknamed 'Kamonde.' Rev Laight who had come as a CMS missionary encouraged the locals to see the need for western education; and to demonstrate this, he first taught the first class from his house. To this end, Laight got his first students as: Gedeon Kabugi, Philip Karanja, Joshua Nguba, Stephano Kathuki and another eight. When Laight went for a leave, in 1915, Mr Clacker came to Mutira with a black missionary from Taveta, Mr Thomas Meero. In a short while, Meero, with support from Clacker, had managed to mobilise his fellow Africans to take education seriously. As a result, he managed to draw a huge class of 60. Johanna Njumbi (1998 – 1991), who later became Rev. Canon Johanna Njumbi and the first Anglican clergyman in Ndia Division, was one of them. Meero went on to lead in the construction of Mutira Primary School, a grass-thatched building. By then, Rev (later Canon) Crawford, who founded Kabare Mission Centre in July 1910, was the inspector of CMS Schools; while his assistant was Jacob Kirii from Kariti, near Sagana. Rev Crawford was also a brother to Dr. Crawford, a missionary doctor based in Kigari, Embu.⁵

Apart from the Anglican Church, another denomination which approached Njega was Consolata (Roman Catholic) Church Mission (C.C.M.). This mission asked for land to build the church. Njega allowed them to settle their mission and gave them land near Mt. Kirinyaga (later Mt. Kenya) forest. They built their church at the present day Kerugoya - the headquarters of the old Kirinyaga District. This small mission centre contributed to the growth of the now Kerugoya Town. Similarly, when another group of Roman Catholic missions approached

⁵Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya: A Short History of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Mount Kenya (1900-1970)*, (Melbourne: Ridley College, 1970), 60. When the Rev and Mrs Crawford went on leave in 1911, they sent their ten pupils to Kigari, Embu, to be cared for by his brother, Dr Crawford. Their names were: Musa Mumai, Philip Kibugi, Petero Mukue, Paulo Mutura (James Nyaga's father), Simeon Thigari (a Mkamba), Daniel Kiruri, Nyaga Citia, Mathayo Gicobi, Nyaga Mbugici, and Kongo. Their teacher was a Mkamba called Joseph Munyao. They stayed at Kigari until Rev Crawford returned in 1913.

him to give them land to settle, he showed them Baricho. Today, Baricho is not only the headquarters of Kirinyaga West District, and the headquarters of Ndia Division, it is also headquarter of Ndia Consituency. Again, the place where it is situated has one of the best schools in Kirinyaga - Baricho boys, St. Agnes Girls, several primary schools, polytechnics, mission centres for both Protestants and Catholics and the list is long. As the church grew, the residents grew economically, socially, intellectually and spiritually.

Bishop Alfred R. Tucker Makes the First Step

As we focus on Mutira Anglican Mission and other ‘neighbouring’ stations, mentioned above, it is critical to appreciate that a long journey starts with one step. For indeed, it is the third and last Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, Alfred R. Tucker (served from 1890 to 1897), who made the first step by urging the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to evangelize the Maasai and Kikuyu. In 1900, Sir Arthur Hardinge, the first Consul General of British East Africa, as Kenya was then called, implored the CMS to commence missionary work among the people living around the slopes of Mt. Kirinyaga (later Mt. Kenya). Taking another step, Hardinge wrote to the Rt. Rev. W. G. Peel, the first Bishop of Mombasa Diocese (served from 1899 to 1916), and made his point clear that “the natives are troublesome and the Consul-General thinks that the missionary work would help to pacify them”!⁶ This leads us to the fact that, both missionaries and the colonial authorities supported the missionary work; but with divergent motives; for as the missionaries aimed at winning the “heathens” for Christ, the colonialists, like the Roman Emperor, Constantine, in the history of the early Church (318 CE), wanted to use the Gospel to calm down the populace as he carried his administrative duties in a cool environment. Again, the missionaries and colonial authorities had to maintain a symbiotic relationship as each needed the other. For the missionaries, protection by the colonial authorities was paramount hence the existence of colonial administration was necessary.

⁶Paul Mwangi et al, *A Century of God's Household*: 10.

The opening up of Anglican Mission Stations, such as Mutira, around Mt. Kenya region was also energised by the missionary zeal itself. In particular, Bishop Peel made several journeys from Mombasa to Nairobi. For example, in both January and June 1900, he visited Nairobi with one aim: obtain a site and thereby make preliminary arrangements for establishing a centre for mission. Subsequently, he encouraged the local CMS administrative body to deliberate on that, and as a result, a missionary conference was held on 18th July 1900. The resolutions of the meeting were clear: 'add Fort Smith (Kikuyu) and Machakos to the eleven already existing CMS missionary districts in British East Africa (Kenya).'⁷ It is from there that the Rev A. W. McGregor was sent as a pioneer missionary work in Central Kenya, in particular Kabete in 1900.

Another major step that brought about the final success of the mission work is the ability to persevere and thereby appreciate suffering as the way of the cross. This trend of appreciating suffering as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit was first set by St Paul in the New Testament. At one stage, he appears to glorify suffering by saying that it is when he is weak that he realises that he is genuinely strong (refer to 2 Corinthians 12). Certainly suffering was overwhelmingly high. McGregor, for instance, had escaped death for the first time when their tent failed, during his ministerial duties at Taveta from 1892. As a result, he and A. Rogers were forced to put their blankets down under a tree. During that time, he was disturbed by something that he felt was on his face, and quickly grabbed it, as he thought it was a mere branch of tree. To his surprise, he realised that it was a deadly black snake; and whipped off the four feet long reptile. McGregor had to escape another death from a wounded leopard but not before it had mauled his hand. With a shortened hand – where fingers were chopped off, the Gikuyu nicknamed him *Gakono* (small hand).⁸ Such moments confirms that the ability to persevere was the single major gift that the early European missionaries

⁷Paul Mwangi et al, *A Century of God's Household*: 10.

⁸Interview with Rev Canon John Mararo, Cool Breeze Hotel – Mombasa, November 11, 2010.

bequeathed to Africa. With faith, Snakes, Lions or Leopards of our times need not impede our missionary journeys to the Promised Land. In other words, no discouragements should stop an idea whose time has come. Thus, the painful birth of Christianity in Kirinyaga, Mutira Anglican Mission in particular, was born from that backcloth, a backdrop that was characterised by risks, misunderstandings, fears and hope.

Mutira Centre Before 1911

Mutira Anglican Mission Centre was started by the Rev. McGregor near the end of 1911. In turn, it is significant to acknowledge that Brandon Laight joined CMS Kenya Mission in 1899. He was posted to Mutira Mission at the end of 1912. Before moving to pioneer the work at Mutira in 1912, he had served at Mukaa in Ukambani and at Mahiga in Nyeri. Both areas were later transferred to the African Inland Mission (AIM) and the then Church of the Scotland Mission (CSM or Presbyterians) respectively.

The specific Centre where the ministerial work began is locally called Njumbi area. To this end, Councillor Karubiu Munyi (1925-) explains how the name *Njumbi* came about, as a coinage of the paramount Chief, Njega wa Gioko. He says that it is derived from the Kikuyu word *gacumbiriri*, meaning, a hilly place or on top of a hill. It came about in around 1908 or thereabout when Rev McGregor of Weithaga mission centre, and his team from Withaga, visited the paramount chief of Ndia, Njega, to request him to grant them permission to open an out-station for the Anglican missions. As is the African custom, where visitors are always received warmly, Njega did not turn them down. Rather he called Chief Ndegwa wa Kimere to his Kiamuthambi office and without mincing words instructed him thus: *Ndirenda uthii na ageni aya ku-u-uria gacumbirira ... kuuria njumbi ... maikare kuria heho-ini*. That is, “I want you to go with these visitors to the cold and hilly land, njumbi, and show them where they can settle and begin their work.”⁹ As ordered, Ndegwa

⁹Interview with Councillor Karubiu Munyi at Karubiu Munyi buildings, Kerugoya on November 24, 2010.

who was the area chief, led the early white missionaries to Mutira where, in 1908, they surveyed the place and pledged to come back and settle in the 15 Acres land. This was first met by fierce resistance from one, Mr. Kairang'a, from Ithimbwi family of Agaciku clan, who claimed ownership of the land. According to Coun Munyi, this resistance delayed the early mission work - as it sent cold shivers down the spines of the missionaries. Again, it made Mutira and the Ndia people of Kirinyaga County to be blacklisted in the missionary circles as "difficult people." In the fifteen Acre land, 3 were earmarked for the church while twelve were allocated to the present day, Mutira primary school. Later in 1970s, twelve Acres of land were taken from the neighbouring Icamumu family of Agaciku clan to build the present day Mutira Girls' Secondary School.¹⁰ Interestingly, out of the 12 acres of land where Mutira Primary School is situated, 5 acres were hived in 2010 to build Canon Johana Njumbi Mutira Mixed Day Secondary School – which stands between the two schools.

With regard to the expected urbanisation of Mutira Centre, the area does not boast of having shops, factories, hospitals, industries, and colleges, save for the 3 schools mentioned earlier. Instead Kagumo Town, which is situated almost a kilometre from the centre is the industrial or trading arm of the centre where computer colleges, private academies, a health centre and thriving businesses can be found by 2012. This makes the old pastoral centre a cool place for survival where there is no industrial pollution whatsoever.

Mutira: The London of Kirinyaga?

Today, Mutira is loosely called 'London' – as the history of White missionaries, thought to have come from London continues to impact on the locality. Being the first Europeans to settle there, Rev and Mrs Laight had a very painful beginning as housing, medical, language and cultural barriers posed a serious challenge. This

¹⁰Interview with Charles Makumi, born 1925, at his Kariko home, next to Mutira Mission Centre on November 21, 2010.

compares with the neighbouring missionary Centre, Kabare, where the school that was began with 30 pupils in 1910 had its attendance steadily decrease because of rumours that schoolboys who continued to read would never be allowed to eat cold food or to marry; and that they would be given the nickname “Mwalimu” (teacher), and eventually not be productive to the communal African society.¹¹

With time, Laights were able to establish educational, medical and pastoral work at Mutira. As a matter of fact, it took some time to build a house, a Church and a dispensary; but by 1913, they were completed. Subsequently, Rev Laight was pleased to report to his senior, Bishop Peel and the Diocesan Synod, that there were good congregations each Sunday.¹² This shows that Laight was a good Steward who filed information concerning the assignment given and later reported back to the Manager. This smacks off good accountability.

Following their very busy schedule in establishing the new Mutira Anglican Mission, a Centre within the existing Diocese of Mombasa which had been established in 1897 under Bishop William G. Peel (1854-1916), Rev. and Mrs. Laight went on leave, in 1915; and since no replacements were available, the Centre was left without European supervision. Nevertheless, Mr. Thomas Bundi Meero, who arrived from Kabare Anglican Mission Centre - a Station that had began in 1910, started a school with 14 boys. This was a turning point in the history of the locality, as ‘formal’ European education introduced new ways of living to date. Again, being taught by a fellow African, the evangelist, was very much appreciated by the locals as the need to compare Western and African forms of education was overwhelming.

Meero’s hard work was confirmed by the Rev. (later Canon) Crawford, who began the neighbouring Kabare Mission Centre in

¹¹Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya: A Short History of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Mount Kenya (1900-1970)*, (Melbourne: Ridley College, 1970), 60.

¹²Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya*: 63.

July 1910, when he visited Mutira Anglican Centre, in November 1915. Interestingly, he found that “Thomas [Meero] the teacher has been steadily going on with the school work and has upwards of 40 boys on his roll. As he has no school building, we are trying to erect a small temporary one of grass which should suffice until Laight’s return.”¹³ On his return, Laight was able to do so.

Rev. Herbert Butcher Arrives as the Second Priest

Following the transfer of Rev. Laight from Mutira to the Coast of Kenya, in 1917, the Rev. (later Canon) Herbert J. Butcher and his wife Elizabeth arrived on May 24, 1919. Throughout the interregnum (1917-1919), Rev. G. W. Wright from the neighbouring Kabare paid several pastoral visits to Mutira and reported that many young people were ready for baptism; an observation that matured on February 20, 1920, when the first baptismal ceremony took place in the locality. Among the candidates who were baptised included Paulo Samweli Kangi, Stefano Philipu Githinji, Musa Ngure, Johana Njumbi (who later became the first Anglican Clergyman in the locality), Simon Petero Kanjobe, Andrea Mwangami and Jakubu William Macaria.¹⁴ Rev. G. W. Wright served Kabare Mission Centre from 1917 to 1919.¹⁵

Butcher Becomes a ‘Rainmaker’

It is during Butcher’s stewardship that Ndia Division experienced two severe droughts, one in 1921 and the other in 1924. In turn, these droughts threatened both humans and animal lives. To counter its damage, medicine men and the rainmakers from Ethaga clan attempted to bring down rain by conducting their rituals without success compared to Butcher, who in both occasions, successfully

¹³ Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya*: 64.

¹⁴ Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya*: 64.

¹⁵ James Munyambu Nyaga, *ACK Kabare Centenary Celebrations (2010): A Brief History of the Church of Christ (Kabare: Kabare Centenary)*

prayed for rain. In particular, the local Chief Nguru, a man who was inclined towards missionary work, approached him in 1921 and asked him to pray for rain so that he could help to avert a major crisis facing the people. As fate would have it, Butcher's prayer was instantly followed by hail storms hitherto unseen, which quenched the thirst of the dry land. In turn, this development had two implications: One, Butcher's prayer and the subsequent torrential rain, which fell after three hours after his prayer, were crucial as they confirmed to Chief Nguru and the rest of the local population that God of Christendom is 'real.' Second, it made the locals to get interested in Butcher's 'religion.' In other words, it gained 'some' credibility to an otherwise eager crowd, and locals could now look forward to more of its future 'miracles.' This resulted in a "conversion boom" followed, as large numbers of people streamed into Mutira mission. This included some medicine men who gave up their practice and surrendered their divining equipment to be burnt.¹⁶ With time, Butcher was looked upon as a formidable medicine man representing a more powerful religion than the local one practiced by unbelievers. Before joining the CMS in 1912, Herbert Butcher, who was born in England in 1879, was an auctioneer.¹⁷ Rev Butcher who served the Centre from 1915 to 1927 was able to build a new church of mud-brick, a combination of wattle and mud, (*Nyumba ya Magoko na Maturubari ma tiri*) which was consecrated by Bishop A. W. Peel, of the then Mombasa Diocese, in November 30, 1924.

Butcher Becomes the First Clergy to Baptise

Butcher was reportedly impressed by the elders of Mutira area who responded well to his baptismal classes, despite its being long and

¹⁶Karanja's (1999:34) interview with an eye witness, Canon Johana Njumbi, April 19, 1991. Others who were interviewed included Mariko Kangi (26th April 1991); Gerishon Matiti (16th May 1991); and Joshua Wagiti (July 16, 1991).

¹⁷KNA: CMS 1/638, Mutira Log Book, entry for 12th December 1921; CMS Archives: G3AL 1917-34, annual letter from Butcher, 1924.

mind-numbing exercise. Why was it long and tedious? In his book, *A Church Come of Age: Fifty Years of Revival in the CPK Diocese of Embu, 1942-1992*,¹⁸ Jesse Mugambi cites the case of Mr. Levi Kenda, an old man, who took nine years before he qualified for baptism, in the neighbourhoods of Mutira, Embu. Accordingly, the students went through the following classes before they were baptized:

a). Listener's Class (Uthikiriria)

In this class, the candidates were introduced to the idea of baptism in general; but their primary task was to listen to the Word of God as was delivered by the catechist/evangelist. As a requirement, a catechist had to cover the main biblical themes such as the Creation, the coming of Christ, forgiveness, Salvation, repentance original sin, Exodus, and the Exile. As the year came to a close, an oral examination was given; after which the strong candidates were promoted to the next class at a church ceremony called *Kurugama*, meaning to 'stand up.' Those who failed the examination would be advised to repeat the class, and probably be examined the following year.

b). Seekers' Class (Ucaria)

This was the second stage in the process of preparation for baptism. As was prescribed, this stage was meant for revision of the themes covered in the first year. There were a few biblical topics that were added, such as the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles creed. After being examined at the end of the second year, the successful ones were promoted to the Readers Class in yet another ritualistic ceremony in the church.

c). Readers' Class (Uthomagi)

At this stage, students were expected to be literate; learners who able to read the Bible and the Anglican Book of Common Prayer

¹⁸ Jesse Mugambi, *A Church Come of Age: Fifty Years of Revival in the CPK Diocese of Embu, 1942-1992*, (Nairobi: Acton, 1992), 15-18.

(BCP), popularly called *Sala ya Bwana* or simply *Thaara*. It is in this level that hard stuff in theology such as teaching on Holy Trinity, the covenant and the Christian sacraments were introduced.

Baptism: Memorizing, Questions and Answer Format

Within the third stage of baptismal preparation, much time was spent on memorizing the catechism. Some of the questions and answers used can be seen below:

Question: What is your Name?

Answer: N or M

Question: Who gave you this Name?

Answer: My Godfathers and Godmothers in my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God; and an inheritor of the Kingdom of heaven.

Question: How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church?

Answer: Two only, Baptism and the Holy Communion

Question: What do you mean by the word Sacrament?

Answer: I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

Baptism as ‘Second Birth’

In answering the question: “Who gave you this Name?” the candidates were made to see baptism as a ‘second birth.’ To this end, baptism made them members of the Church of Christ. They also became inheritors of the Kingdom of heaven. All this denotes a rebirth into ‘a new creation.’

The Final list of Baptismal Candidates

On Successful completion of the Readers’ Class, the candidates were examined. The final list of the baptismal candidates which was passed over by the Catechist/evangelist to the serving Clergy was compiled out of the tested candidates; some of whom would be found suitable.

d). Confirmation Class (Kirathi Kia Moko)

Confirmation was a follow up from Baptism. In other words, it was more of a fourth stage in the preparation of baptism, even though a person was baptised after qualifying in the third stage. For the confirmation class, a candidate had to undergo further instructions for another one year. In this final class, they covered topics such as the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed, Martyrdom and other challenging and contemporary issues. Those who qualified were handed over by the Clergy to the Bishop for confirmation. After that, a person became a full member of the Church, and was allowed for the first time to be a partaker of the Holy Communion. Following this long process, Paulo Samweli Kangi, Stefano Philipu Githinji, Musa Ngure, and Johana Njumbi among others succeeded in becoming full members of Mutira Anglican Church in its moment of its inception.

One ugly incident however remains memorable to date, when District Commissioner's (DC) emissary was badly assaulted by Christians (*athomi*) who had undergone the above Christian rituals in 1916. According to an eye witness, Canon Johana Njumbi, an emissary had been sent to call Thomas Meero, the head of *athomi* (enlightened and schooled) community at Mutira. Accompanied by a number of retainers of the local chief, the messenger sought to accomplish his mission by disrupting a Sunday morning service which Meero was conducting. This enraged the flock, who set upon him and his companions. Following this incident, seven ring leaders (*athomi*) were arrested and locked in, a development that sent fears that Christian persecutions were in the offing. Luckily, Rev Edmund Crawford, the resident missionary at Kabare who was left in charge of Mutira, followed up the matter and secured their release from prison. Despite their release, they still paid a fine as compensation for the alleged assaults.¹⁹

¹⁹John Karanja's (1999: 114) interview with Canon Johana Njumbi, April 19, 1991.

First Confirmations at Mutira Mission Centre

The first confirmations at Mutira Mission Centre took place on June 23, 1921. During this occasion which was presided over by Bishop A. W. Peel of Mombasa Diocese, 21 men and five women were confirmed. In turn, Peel was received by Butcher and his Parish Council Committee. The occasion was joyous as the people of Mutira saw the Diocesan Bishop for the first time. In turn, the Bishop laid a foundation stone for the construction of the Church. During Bishop Peel's visit, the first "vestry meeting" of the Church was held consisting of Rev Butcher, the Bishop and twelve African Christians.²⁰ Johana Njumbi, later Rev. Canon Johana Njumbi, was one of the elders who attended the vestry meeting under the Chairmanship of Bishop Peel.

In December 1921, Rev. Butcher was able to report that he had just had a service at which 55 had been admitted as Enquirers, and that the Church "was crammed, with many outside who could not obtain admission. The Sunday School has been steadily growing – today there was an attendance of 154."²¹ In 1925, he finished building the ladies' house which was occupied first by Miss Lorna Bowden who was at Mutira for a short time, as a pastoral assistant.

Rev. Hillard (Gikubia) Arrives as the Third Clergy

Subsequently, Rev. Butcher's place was taken by Rev. and Mrs W. H. Hillard when the former and his wife left Mutira. On Rev. Hillard's appointment, it was suggested that Kabare should become the pastoral centre and Mutira the educational centre for the training of teachers for out-centres. This scheme did not see the light of day as it was not given the necessary support by both Mutira and Kabare Centres. Another interesting dimension during Rev. Hillard's tenure is that the first woman evangelist called Jane Edith Asher was sent to Mutira to help in the women's and girl's work.²² This development

²⁰Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya*: 64.

²¹Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya*: 64.

²²Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya*: 65.

points towards the critical role of women ministries right from the missionary era. As the people of Kirinyaga, in 1980s and in the early part of the 1990s, resisted women ordination to priesthood, there was need to appreciate that women ministries have been there in the early church and in the missionary era, and therefore, our contemporary society has nothing but to appreciate that reality.

While Rev Butcher made a mark as a baptist, Hillard made a mark in conducting church marriages. Alice Wakanugu Mwari wa Gatangi, w/o Michael Karuga, recalls that Rev. Hillard, who was nicknamed Gikubia, was mighty and a giant figure. In an interview, on 10th March 2010, Alice explained that Rev. Hillard, who replaced Butcher in 1927, will be greatly remembered for how he forced Africans to attend church services on Sundays. During those days, it was a common practice for Africans to work on Sundays but Hillard declared that this was to be stopped. To Africans, all days were equal working days hence none of the days of the week was more special than the other nor was there a day which was insignificant to the other. Alice confirmed that Rev. Hillard would walk around the farms that surrounded the church and mostly Kiamai pastoral area²³ and literally beat up men and women on Sundays with a whip. It was a common practice to hear wails and screams on Sunday – as people were being made to attend church services. Armed with a gun and a whip, Hillard would evangelise with or without a bible, and where need arises, he would beat up non-church goers.

Mutira Without Resident European Missionaries (1929-)

On the eve of January 7, 1928, a severe earthquake shook Mutira and the entire Mount Kenya region. Consequently, extensive damage to the two Mission houses: the church, the school and the dispensary. This forced the missionaries and their assistants to sleep in tents for a period of six months. As for Rev. and Mrs. W. H. Hillard, they had to shift to the neighbouring Kabare Mission Centre. He only

²³Kiamai pastoral area is near the Mutira Mission Centre/ Headquarters.

returned to Mutira in June 1928 and built the current house that is now the parish office.²⁴

From 1929 onwards, there was no resident European missionary priest at Mutira. In fact, a research in the Nairobi national archive shows that the Mutira Mission was officially closed in 1929; though in reality, it continued under African lay leadership. For some years after 1929, the resident missionary at Kabare and Kigari visited Mutira mission centre taking overall responsibility for all ecclesiastical duties. Among the clergy who visited Mutira during this period to offer pastoral care include: Rev H. J. Church (1933-43) and Rev Canon Thomas Francis Cecil Bewes (1935 – 37) who translated the book of Ecclesiastes to the local language in 1940. Other clergymen who visited Mutira for pastoral oversight included: Rev L J Beecher (1937-39) and Rev John Comely who served Mutira from Kigari, Embu. Under the stewardship of Rev Comely, many people were joined in a holy matrimony. One of them is Jason Gathumbi and Susan wa Reuben Kimotho, on September 1, 1930.²⁵ Later in 1932, Mr Gathumbi worked hand-in-hand with Mr Justin King'uru Karoki to steward Mutira Primary School, when the first African Head Teacher, Peter Gatheru – 1930-1934, left for Nairobi.²⁶ To this end, the Rev Canon Bewes, the missionary at Kabare mission, wrote:

Peter Gatheru, an old High School boy is now in charge (of the school) and is doing extremely well. The Rev Johana Njumbe (deacon) is living at Mutira, and is in charge of the pastoral work

²⁴CPK Mutira Parish, History of Mutira Parish, 1981, Unpublished material, Kerugoya.

²⁵CPK Mutira Parish, History of Mutira Parish, 1981, Unpublished material, Kerugoya.

²⁶Among the people who studied around this time included: Hosea Mbui, Jeremiah Kimengi, Eliud Njiraini Machuki and Leonard Mwangi Kathuki. Later, Arthur Gitura became the third African Headmaster and taught Jackan Kangangi, Tirus Kagucia and his wife, and Leonard Mwangi Kathuki.

there. His wife conducts classes for women. The dispensary was opened at the beginning of 1934.²⁷

Rev John Comely (1877-1938), who is remembered for joining many people in a holy matrimony, was born at Cowhill Farm in Gloucestershire. His father took him to a Mr. Bennett for training when he was young man. In turn, Bennett had a milk business in London, where Comely first worked before he undertook ministerial duties. It is when working under Bennett's milk business that he was converted to Christianity. Later, he fell out with his employer after he refused to co-operate in an act of fraud. In particular, Bennett had instructed him to remove daily a certain amount of cream from the churn of milk waiting to be sold by the salesmen, which was marked full cream. Comely chose to leave his good job rather than serve mammon. After leaving the milk plant, Comely applied to work with the CMS who ultimately accepted him. He then joined Islington (the CMS training college) in 1905. Following his successful completion of his studies, he and four other young men were sent to start mission work among the Dinka of Sudan. As a missionary in Sudan, Comely felt the mission was fruitless unless something was done to make it fruitful; hence he returned to Europe in 1908 to begin training as a Clergyman. To this end, he studied for a degree at Cambridge; and was subsequently ordained to priesthood in 1914. He rejoined the CMS in 1915; and was stationed at Kigari, Embu from 1915 to 1938.²⁸

Consecration of Emmanuel Church Mutira

During this period, 1933 to 1945, the Anglican Church around the slopes of Mount Kenya was experiencing an assortment of challenges. Among them was the inability to pay her workers, with

²⁷Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya*: 65.

²⁸John Karanja, *Founding an African Faith*: 83-84.

²⁹John Karanja, *Founding an Anglican Faith: Kikuyu Anglican Christianity 1900 – 1945* (Nairobi: Uzima, 1999), 222.

some going for months without their stipends. According to John Karanja, many of them had to live on the produce of their own little plots of land, which “was the price of devolution.”²⁹ Another challenge in 1930s was increased sexual immorality among the youth, a situation that was caused by the collapse of cultural sanctions and the sharp rise in bride price. Certainly, the collapse of the old social order brought down hitherto restrictions on sexual activity among the youth. In addition, young men continued in sexual promiscuity as they postponed their marriages so as to first work hard and acquire enough wealth in form of livestock and money, as dowry. This trend upset both African elders and the European missionaries. The fact that it was also a period of devolution (where the church was moving faster to the grassroots), revival and consolidation did not help matters. As a stop gap measure, the missionaries encouraged sex education in schools which they sponsored plus taking disciplinary measures to their adherents who were found guilty though the challenge remained as a thorn in the flesh.³⁰

Despite financial constraints, African Christians in Mutira and in the rest of Central Kenya displayed remarkable zeal for construction of permanent church buildings. In total, from 1933 to 1945, about seven permanent buildings were either completed or started. In particular, St. Michael’s Church Gathukeine, Murang’a³¹ which was built in 1926 was enlarged in 1936; St. John’s Church Kahuhia which was started in 1926 was consecrated in September 1939; Emmanuel Church Mutira which was started in 1933 was consecrated in June 1937; and St. Paul’s Church Kiruri which was started in January 1938 was consecrated in September 1939. The latter three (Mutira inclusive) were built without financial assistance from the CMS. Again, St. Paul’s Mother Church Kabete and St.

³⁰See John Karanja, *Founding an Anglican Faith*: 241-2.

³¹Gathukeine church, Murang’a, is the birth place of the illustrious clergyman, Rev Felix Nyoro, whose services to Mutira pastorate and the larger Kirinyaga remains remarkable.

Stephen's Church Njumbi were started during this period (1933-45).³²

What factors made it possible to complete Emmanuel Church Mutira in a short period of three years (1933-37)? First are the hard working people that she had – a people who understood the importance of the task. Second is the leadership of Rev Johana Njumbi. According to Karanja, he was “wise and dynamic.”³³ Again, a missionary clergy from the neighbouring pastorate, Kabare, Rev Bewes, in his 1936-7 annual letter, praised Njumbi for his dynamic leadership which had made possible for the construction of the Church and pastorate office.³⁴ Undoubtedly, when leadership is entrusted to the wise and dynamic, whether in the Country, County, Municipal or even the Church, the tasks ahead become easy, as a good leader has a way of ‘lightening’ the burdens of the people he or she leads. Third, Mutira as a medium-sized pastorate did not begin an extraordinary big building; rather, they put up a medium size building for about four hundred worshippers which cost about 150 British pounds to build.³⁵

Njumbi's dynamic and wise leadership must have been a product of good leadership of his predecessors, Laight, Butcher, Hillard, and Comely among others. For it is no wonder that by 1923, Mutira Anglican Mission had been elevated to a Pastorate. By elevation to pastorate status, it meant that the local Christians got a greater voice in the running of their own Church. In each pastorate, a committee was set up comprising of an African pastor (where one was available), the resident missionary, and at least five communicant members of the pastorate. In turn, the committee had several responsibilities some of which included: collection and disbursement of church funds, making church programmes, taking direct responsibility of church

³²For details, see John Karanja, 223.

³³Ibid: 224.

³⁴KNA: CMS 1/638: Mutira Log Book, entry for 13th November 1935.

³⁵See John Karanja, 224.

property, evangelism campaigns, and advising the priest on disciplinary matters.³⁶

Although there were no set rules for declaring an area a pastorate, Bishop Heywood in 1924 attempted a clarification by leaning towards numbers as opposed to finances. To this end, he suggested that all Centres/Stations with over 50 communicants should become pastorates. Upon being confirmed a pastorate, a Centre was allowed to send delegates to the African Church Council (ACC), the central organ of the young African Church. In turn, ACC had the duty of deliberating on critical issues facing the church and finding a way forward. It also included payment of all African clergy under the Council's terms and regulation subject to approval by the serving Bishop.³⁷ Like the current Diocesan Pastoral Care Committee (PCC), it could also nominate African candidates for holy orders, transfer African clergy and even discipline where necessary.

Thus, a pastorate status was seen as a great achievement for a mission Centre; for since Africans were excluded from the Missionary Conferences, the principal decision making body in Kenya before the formation of the Diocesan Synod in 1921, being members of a pastorate from 1923 gave them a forum where they could air their views. To this end, six mission centres/stations in central Kenya had attained a pastorate status by 1924. That is: Kabete 1917, Weithaga 1917, Gathukeine 1922, Kahuhia 1923, Mutira 1923 and Kabare 1924.³⁸

³⁶CMS: G3AS/1923/9, Constitution of the African Church Council as revised by Delegates in Nairobi, 17th November 1922.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸CMS: G3AL/1917-34: Annual letters from Leaky (1917), Hoper (1923) and Rampley (1924); CMS Gathukeine Station Log Book, entry for 29th September 1922; KNA: Mutira Log Book, entry for 6th August 1923.

Mutira Out-Centres (1930 - 1970)

By 1930s, a number of out-centres had sprung up around Mutira, notably those at Baricho, Kiburu, Kiini and Gakoigo. Later the new Church, Emmanuel Mutira, was built of stone and was dedicated by Bishop Richard Heywood, of the then Mombasa Diocese, in August 1935. From the time of the departure of the Rev L. J. Beecher from Kabare in 1939, Mutira, like Kabare, had been under the care of African clergy with occasional supervision from Kigari, Embu. African Clergymen of note in the early history of Kabare mission centre include: Rev Musa Mumai who retired after a long and faithful Anglican Church ministry in 1952. With regard to Mutira mission centre, great clergymen of note who oversaw the mission since the 1930s include: the Revs Canon Johana Njumbi (1939-1952); Nathaniel Gacira (1953-54), Paul Kibuti (1955-58), Johana Muturi (1958-65), Joseph Mwangi Ngooro (1965-66), Joseph Kangangi Mwanake (1966-70), Zakariah Nyaga Karani (1971-75), Godfrey Ngigi Ndirima (1976 to April 1978), Jeremiah Njogu Mugo (May 1978-79), Peter Karanja Njoroge (1980-1981), Daniel Munene Ngoru (January - May 1989), Frederick Ndege Mutugi (May 1989-1990), Ephantus Muriuki (1990-1), John Kangangi (2002), Daniel Mbogo (2004), Francis Mwai (2010) and Julius Njogu Nyamu (2011). Others who served as Curates include: Revs Bernard Kamau, Jason Minja Mwai, Gerishom Wachira Wambugu, Wilson Kangunu, Jephthah K. Gathaka, Cephas Njenga Njoroge, Amos Karani and John Karani among others.

In 1970, out-centres connected with Mutira included: *Kamuiru* under lay leadership of Erastus Mwai Ngunju; *Karaini* which was started in 1931 was under the leadership of several elders, namely: Gerishom Kibugi, Gordon Kariti and Gardi Macaria. *Gatwe* was under the lay leadership of Samuel Gakuya; *Kabonge* under Henry Kuruga; Kiamaina which was started in 1920 was by 1970 under lay stewardship of elders who included: ex-chief Habrew and Samuel Gicoya. *Mutuma* was stewarded by Charles Muraguri; *Kangaita Factory* under Samuel Gakuya; while *Karimaini* was under Moses Gachimu and Edward Nguu.

With regard to Kiandangae parish which was curved out of Mutira parish, it was begun by Rev Hillard in 1926 as a mere out-centre. At the same time, Mr David Gaciraini founded a school in the locality, as part of his pastoral ministry. As the centre grew, it was deemed necessary to establish a parish in its own right. Later, it was felt that it could not stand as a parish. Consequently, it was returned to its old status where it was cared under Mutira. But in 1962, it became a sub-Parish and later a full parish. As a parish, Kiandangae, by 1970, had her own sub-centres which included: *Kagio*, *Baricho* (started in 1923), *Kiburu* (started in 1920), *Kiini* (started in 1922), *Sagana*, where classes were held in the school, *Gacaru*, *Karima*, *Kianjege*, *Kombuini*, and *Thiguku*. In turn, leading elders who have been associated with the old Kiandangae parish, before 1970, include: Elijah Kimani, Harun Maina, Phinehas Wang'ombe, Zakayo Nguba, Joseph Kanyoro, Erasto Kanama, Njeru Githae, and Paul Kibuto. Clergy who have served in the old Kiandangae parish include: Revs N. Gicira (1950-53), Paul Kibuti; F. Nyoro; J. Kago (1960-62); Jason Minja (1962-64); E. Makaho (1964-67); and Richard Mbui (1967-1971).³⁹

With regard to Kerugoya parish, which was curved from Mutira Parish, it is imperative to acknowledge that it was established in 1970. Rev Gerishom Wacira was its first parish priest. By the time of its inauguration, 1970, it had various out-centres which included: *Gakoigo*, *Gatuto*, *Kiaritha*, *Kiabarikiri*, *Mukinduri*, *Kangaita*, *Kiamuthambi* and *Thaita*. Her leading elders included: Amos Kathigo, Daniel Gathiomi, Joel Gatungo, Henry Karani, Charles Nderi, Mrs Josephine Wamwetha, Andrea Njogu, John Gacoki, Gerishon Mboi and Bernard Ngari.⁴⁰

Concerning the Mwea parish of 1970, centres that made up the parish included: *Gategi*, *Kimbimbi*, *Mutithi*, *Karaba*, *Nguka*, *Murubara*, *Muruara*, *Rukanga*, *Ndindiruku*, *Kiorugari*, *Gathigiriri*, *Kandongu*, and *Marikiini*. Leading elders included:

³⁹Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya*: 66.

⁴⁰Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya*: 63.

Elishah Gatuna, Stephen Musyimi Kisilu (father to Hon Rev. Mutava Musyimi), Joseph Githui, Zablon Gathogo, Phares Muhia, Reuben Ngumbe, Wilson Mwaura, Earnest Mathenge, Frederick Karaya, Micah Muciga, Mrs Alice Muasa, Francis Gicuki, Chief Joel Karubiu, Moses Kariuki, Samuel Ngige, and Alam Mugo.

Historically, Mwea was established as a settlement scheme, being seen as part of the process of rehabilitating *Mau Mau* Detainees. In view of this, a series of work-camps were built on the Mwea plains, and from them the detainees went daily and placed the whole area under irrigation with water from Thiba and Nyamindi Rivers. To this end, large areas were put under rice cultivation, and detainees were given first priority in taking up plots on this scheme. By the time the erstwhile governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, declared a state of emergency on 20th October 1952, the Rev (later Bishop) Sospeter Magua had worked and established valuable contacts that culminated to the success of Mwea mission work as we know it today. Of course, not every part of Mwea was in the old Mutira pastorate, rather only half of Mwea, the Western side. Rev Magua was succeeded as a priest by the Revs Manasses Kuria (later second Archbishop of Kenya), Bedan Ileri, Daudi Petro and J. Kago. Others included: E. N. Chandi (1965-69), Godfrey Ngigi (1970-71), Timotheo Mwasya and Solomon Kago among others.

It is during the stewardship of Manasses Kuria that St Christopher Church was built by detainees just outside the Thiba Camp. In turn, this became the centre of the newly formed parish of Mwea. Within, Mwea, another mission centre was established at Riakanau, on the banks of Tana River, locally called *Rui rwa Thagana*, in 1947. As a result, Riakanau church was built and dedicated; while in 1948, Riakanau Primary School was built. Here, the undisputed leading elder was Stephen Kisilu.⁴¹ Today, Riakanau Parish, as it is called, is in Mbeere Diocese. Politically, it is in Gachoka constituency, Embu County. It points to the fact that the old Mutira parish which the likes of Canon Johana Njumbi served

⁴¹Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya*: 67.

was too large that today it is found in both Embu and Kirinyaga Counties. It was a great sacrifice for pioneers of the old Mutira Parish to have served such huge areas, which were risky, difficult and inconvenient. With transport system being a challenge, Canon Johana Njumbi and his contemporaries struggled to reach various destinations using bicycles, or merely trekking for long distances. They lacked stipends as parishes could not afford; their young families, at times, went hungry – as the flock could not effectively sustain the clergy. Were these struggles in vain?

Some Setbacks: The Case of Kiburu Church

Despite the remarkable progress in the mission work, the African adherents of the ‘new’ religion found themselves, in some places, divided a long ethnic and sub-ethnic line, thereby affecting the smooth progress of the then Mutira parish negatively. Speaking from a wider perspective, John Karanja notes that African Christians were divided by two main factors, namely: family conflicts and divergent attitudes towards Kikuyu beliefs and practices.⁴² For before the coming of Europeans, Kikuyu society was divided into competing factions who revolved around powerful families whose economic and political strength was based on acquired land, polygamy, large families with many children, and the ability to attract many tenants into their land. Unfortunately, this rivalry between the ‘rich’ and the ‘poor’ transplanted into the church; hence rivalry continued in another dimension altogether. With the church overturning their understanding of high or low status (sociologically called status inversion, where those who were first become last), it was felt that the way to regain lost status is now to go to the church, acquire western education and rate wealth and prosperity in the new understanding. To do this, some sought to secure positions within the church’s hierarchy so as to enhance their status. In view of this, powerful *mbaris* (read extended families) objected to the local churches being led by the

⁴²John Karanja, *Founding of an African Faith: Kikuyu Anglican Christianity 1900-1945* (Nairobi: Uzima, 1999), 194.

local people from the smaller clans. In some cases, an out-station church in a particular area could find that it had no ‘local’ leaders as lay readers or catechist. That is, the running of an out-station could be administered by Africans from a far clan, from across the neighbouring hill or valley; and after some time, agitations would begin as the locals would start wondering why it isn’t one of their local people serving as evangelist, catechist, lay reader or even as a priest.

But such an agitation is theologically problematic, for the Church is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. Is there any credible justification for keeping away our brothers and sisters just because they come from certain families, clans, races, backgrounds, ethnic groups – even though they might be very competent? Why then do we talk of Ecumenism? In any case, reconstruction is inclusivity for all regardless of prejudices. Further, as St. Paul says, there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women, between Africans and Europeans, between foreigners and inhabitants, for “You are all one in union with Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). Additionally, the Great Commission does not know borders. It is simply: “Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples ...” (Matt. 28:19). St. Paul tells us that we have many gifts of the Holy Spirit. This includes: gift of teaching, suffering, administration, prophesy, interpreting and speaking in tongues (I Cor. 12-14) among others. These gifts should be shared inter-culturally to edify the Church. These divisions were therefore unnecessary.

A case in point is Kiburu which was began in 1920 as an outstation of Mutira Mission Centre which led to a split of the Anglican Church in 1931 for various reasons; one of them being unpopular leadership. According to reports in CMS archives, London, Rampley ascribed the division to the unwillingness by Kiburu Church leaders to be governed by the elders from Mutira Mission Centre itself, as the locals felt demeaned by the ‘visiting servants.’⁴³ Why

⁴³KNA: CMS 1/638, Mutira Log Book, entry for March 30, 1931.

not elevate locals to serve in the church rather than ‘import’ people from the church headquarters? They wondered. Nevertheless, while the struggle for autonomy played an important part in the split, it was both preceded and overshadowed by clan conflict. Its leading elder was Elijah Kimani (1975-1985), whose style of leadership was seen by some as authoritarian; while others saw it as decisive and pragmatic. Even though Anjiru clan were the largest and most powerful in the locality, they had no voice in the running of the Church, as the Aithekahuno (Angari) clan members who controlled it were comparatively a small group. Such factors caused resentment among members of larger clans in the area surrounding the present day St. John’s Kiburu Anglican Church, Kirinyaga West District of Kirinyaga County, Kenya.

The final trigger that led to ‘official’ pull out in 1931 was when Elijah Kimani announced the Anglican Church’s stand against female circumcision. Kimani was immediately accused of introducing ‘new commandments’ that are not in either the Old or New Testament; hence they could not understand what he was up to. ‘Is he trying to privatise the church? Is it Kimani’s clan conspiracy?’ They wondered. As a matter of fact, Elijah Kimani’s announcement on the church stand was long overdue and belatedly done, as he was supposed to have announced it as early as March 1929. In other words, the suspicions that were felt after he announced his ‘personal commandments’ with ‘intent to chase away other clans’ from the Anglican church were unwarranted. The announcement came after an ecumenical conference involving various denominations (Anglican, presbyterian, AIC/AIM) which was held in Tumu Tumu Presbyterian Church, in the present day Nyeri County, from 8th to 12th March 1929. In this conference, Mutira Anglican Mission was represented by Elijah Njogu, Johana Njumbi and Elijah Kimani. The fact that all the three were Africans shows that Mutira had taken African leadership much earlier. European representation included: Rev. W. P. Knapp (Kambui Station); Rev. L. H. Downing (Kijabe Station); Rev. R. Reynolds (Githumu); Miss Rogers (Gathukeine);

Rev. W. J. Rampley⁴⁴ (Kabare); Rev. Dr. Phillip (Tumu Tumu); Rev. R. G. M. Calderwood (Tumu Tumu); Miss Stevenson (Tumu Tumu); A. R. Barlow (Kikuyu). In the conference, Mr. Calderwood opened with a devotional session; while Dr. Phillip, in the name of the Mission Staff at Tumu Tumu and the Church, heartily welcomed the delegates. Mr. Calderwood explained the steps which led to the meeting being called. Afterwards, Rev. Kahuho of the Presbyterian Church (Tumu Tumu) was elected the Chair of the meeting; while Stanley Kiama (Tumu Tumu) was chosen as the Clerk/secretary of the meeting. Interestingly, the Europeans ‘retired’ – as they unusually took part as ordinary members.

In this conference of 1929, various resolutions were made. They include:

- a). *Concerning female circumcision*: It was agreed with one dissentient that this custom is evil, and should be abandoned by all Christians. This resolution proposed that all who require their children to submit to it be suspended by the churches everywhere.
- b). *Beer*: All agreed that beer is an evil, and that it should be forbidden in our Churches, and be made a matter of discipline. Things that were to be included in this ‘law’ were: drunkenness, beer-drinking, buying and selling beer, manufacturing it, paying part of the bride price with beer etc.
- c). *Mission Spheres*: A memo of co-operation was circulated that gave an account of mission decisions on co-operation.

⁴⁴Canon William James Rampley (1882-1959) was a son of a farmer from Suffolk in England. He spent his early years as a coachman on an estate in Sussex. He first went to Kenya in 1913 as an African Inland Mission (AIM) missionary. He joined the CMS in 1917. From 1919 to 1932, he was serving at Kabare where he was stationed. As a priest, he used hands-off approach in leadership, as he adopted a policy of handing over responsibility to the local church.

- d). *Education of Christian children*: The elders asked the missions to consider the possibility of providing educational sessions both morning and afternoon for Christian children.⁴⁵

Thus, in announcing the Anglican Church's stand against beer and female circumcision, Elijah Kimani was just attempting to implement the Minutes of the ecumenical conference at Tumu Tumu of 12th March 1929. It is interesting to note that he took time before he announced it to the members of the congregation. Did he fear the possible repercussions? Was he 'converted' to those ideas? Following his final announcement, a large group of Christians, consisting mainly of Anjiru clan, seceded from CMS as Anglican Church was then loosely called. They joined the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA) loosely called locally as *Indi*. Today, 2010, both churches (Anglican and AIPCA) are built side by side, each with a sizeable membership. In fact, the headquarters of the AIPCA Archdeaconry, Kirimara, is situated at Kiburu Township opposite Kiburu Anglican Church. During the 1931 'schism,' only thirteen members, mainly from Aithekahuno clan of Elijah Kimani, were left in Kiburu Anglican church when others moved to African Instituted Churches, especially the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA), Kiburu. Of course some travelled as far as Karatina, in the present day Nyeri County, every Sunday to worship in other African Instituted Churches, but those who crossed over to AIPCA Kiburu appears to be numerically superior.

From this narrative, we gather that the underlying trouble at Kiburu was an inter-clan power struggle, which dated back to the pre-colonial era. Interestingly, Elijah Kimani's son, Joshua Kiongo, is a leading Pentecostal church leader well known in Kirinyaga County and beyond, as an energetic preacher and mobilizer. By 2012, he was heading the Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK) in Kirinyaga County as a Pastor with the main office in Kerugoya

⁴⁵See details, CMS Archives: G3A5/1929/66 (see also John Karanja 1999: 202-205).

Township. Kimani's other sons include: Councillor Charles Kiringa, Manasseh Ndegwah a renowned teacher and administrator. Ndegwah's daughter, Leah Wangithi was, by 2011, an active church leader at St. John's Kiburu Anglican Church. When Kimani died in 1985, he was buried within St. John's Kiburu Church compound as his name was synonymous with the church which he painfully built; and as his grave lays there, his offspring have gallantly continued with church and social affairs from where he probably left.

Kiburu's case compares with that of Gacharage in 1930. In turn, Gacharage which was founded in 1925 as an out-school of Kabete was inhabited by *Mbari ya Muya*, a wealthy family whose ancestors migrated from Murang'a in the middle of the 19th century CE. On the other ridge, *Mbari ya Kihara*, an equally wealthy and powerful family occupied it. With time, a strong rivalry developed between the two extended families. Although CMS missionaries had already set a base at Kabete in as early as 1900, being rich in land and livestock, *Mbari ya Muya* did not see the value of western education, which was being propagated by missionaries, until in the late 1920s. In particular, they objected to the establishment of a school in their locality because they realised that teachers would come from *Mbari ya Kihara*. From the researches by John Karanja, (currently an Associate Professor of Church History, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, USA,) in March 1991, the Muya extended family (*Mbari ya Muya*) was wondering why the Kiharas failed to provide land for the building of a school if education was as important as those teachers suggested.⁴⁶ Curiously, Joshua Mucheru, a member of *Mbari ya Muya*, who had provided land where the school was finally built, but later denounced mission Christianity, decided to hand over the school to the independents during the infamous female circumcision crisis in Central Kenya of 1930s. Supported by some mission adherents who were members of his clan, Mucheru violently disrupted a church service one Sunday morning in 1930. In particular, he attacked Andrew Machua, one of the teachers. Though he was

⁴⁶John Karanja, *Founding of an African Faith*: 195.

arrested, his supporters attempted to destroy the school completely. Their plans were however thwarted by the timely arrival of Cecil Bewes, the resident European missionary.⁴⁷

Thus, the case of Kiburu is not an isolated case as Gacharage 1930 crisis has demonstrated. While the Kiburu 'schism' took place in 1931, one wonders: did these two incidents inform one another? Considering that they both took place in central Kenya, can they speak for the whole of Africa? To a large extent, the incident speak for the collective pain of the birth of African Christianity where disagreements, suspicions, misunderstandings, conflicts between culture and the Gospel among other challenges were the order of the day. Coupled with this, various groups took different positions, especially with regard to the case of Gospel and culture. In some cases, the liberals' readiness to resort to traditional medicine after 'modern' methods of treatment had proved ineffective upset the 'hardliners.' In turn, the liberals were ready to employ both modern and traditional methods to resolve personal crises – a phenomenon which was dismissed by 'hard-liners' as taking people back to 'paganism.' The Kiburu case, where clan supremacists dominated the scene, is one dimension of underlying challenges in establishing an African Christianity. Other challenges in different dimensions dominated the early growth of the church during the latter part of the 19th and the first half of the 20th Century CE.

Mutira Mission During the *Mau Mau* War

After the State of Emergency was declared, people of Mutira were put in villages. By June 1954, the War Council took the decision to enforce villagisation throughout Kikuyuland, Mutira included. Villagisation means "the compulsory resettlement of people from their scattered, ridge-top farms, into centralized, regulated villages, situated at key points along the busier roads."⁴⁸ While some villages

⁴⁷Ibid

⁴⁸Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005), 294.

were principally meant to protect the loyalists, most of the 854 established villages or camps were in reality, mass detention camps intended to punish *Mau Mau* sympathisers. In turn, this negatively affected the trend in Anglican missions – as most of her members were the key targets and suspects.

In his confidential “Handover Report of [2nd July] 1956 for Ndia,” the District Officer, E. D. Gordon says,

Mau Mau broke out into active opposition to [the] Government in Ndia considerably later than in other Kikuyu districts – it must be appreciated that the Wandia are Kikuyu entirely and closely related to the Kikuyu of Mathira. Hence, when open violence broke out, it was more brutal and vicious than in Gichugu and Embu Divisions. When I took the Division in August 1954 the ‘war’ was at its height and the *Mau Mau* had virtually gained control of the whole population with the exception of a very small nucleus of loyal Tribal Police and Embu Guard. There were large armed *Mau Mau* gangs all over the Division, varying in strength from 90 under ‘General’ Ndaya to 20 under minor ‘Brigadiers.’ ... 75% of the Headmen were detained for their support of *Mau Mau*.... It is still very difficult to find Headmen in Kiine when others fall by the wayside, and there are still several in Mutira who are not fit for their jobs, partly due to Chief Stephen [Ngigi Machere’s] partiality for having weak men under him who will bow to his will in everything.”⁴⁹

In these confidential reports he describes some characters from Mutira as follows, “Leonard Kunga, the Divisional Clerk, is good and has a good idea about registration, filing and payment vouchers as well as being an above average typist as African clerks go.” He also talks of Joel Gatimu thus, “Labour Department. Registration Clerk... who always has a good excuse for not doing his job...” Gordon goes to analyse Chief Stephen Ngige as “highly political minded” and considered him “the leader of Embu District.” He is

⁴⁹E. D. Gordon “Handover Report of [2nd July] 1956 for Ndia,” the District Officer, Ndia.

Highly intelligent, well educated and utterly dishonest. When he wishes to be he can be a very efficient chief, but usually he is too occupied with his political affairs to worry about his location. I believe him, nevertheless, to have been one of the main leaders in Ndia against *Mau Mau* despite many attempts by Special Branch to implicate him in terrorist activity. He makes out that his location has the largest number of loyalists in the District, but this is untrue as he includes all his friends automatically as loyalists, though many of them were active *Mau Mau* supporters. I must apologise for landing you with this difficult customer.⁵⁰

Concerning some sub-chiefs during the *Mau Mau* rebellion, Gordon describes them as follows:

Eston; Mutitu, Stephen [Ngige's] camp: a useless little man who simply acts as Stephen's 'yes man.'... Manasseh; Kagumo: a fine Emergency record and quite a good headman, though too much under Stephen's [Ngigi Machere] thumb. Another difficult village owing to too many superior types, including Geoffrey Kareithi's father-in-law, Hosiah.... Difatha [Gatugi]; Mutira: A good headman with a fine Emergency record.the first in Mutira to reject *Mau Mau*....Beware of Stanley Ikinya, the headmaster. He is a first class Headmaster, but a dangerous man who was on close terms with all the leading *Mau Mau* in the area; although Stephen [Ngige] maintains that he was loyal....⁵¹

Thus, Kenya, from 1952 to 1959 was under a state of emergency arising from the *Mau Mau* insurgency against British colonial rule in general and its land policies in particular. This rebellion took place almost exclusively in the highlands of central Kenya among the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru peoples. Tens of thousands of Kenyans died in the fighting or in the detention camps and restricted villages.

⁵⁰E. D. Gordon "Handover Report of [2nd July] 1956 for Ndia," 33.

⁵¹E. D. Gordon "Handover Report of [2nd July] 1956 for Ndia," 33.

⁵²<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2962.htm> (accessed 13/8/2010).

British losses were about 650. During this period, African participation in the political process increased rapidly.⁵² And although Mutira parish was under African clergy during these turbulent times (Rev Johana Njumbi 1934-1952 Rev Nathaniel Gacira 1953-1954; Rev Paul Kibuti 1955-1958; and Rev Johana Muturi 1958-1965), the mission work was adversely affected to an extent that it slowed down. Characteristically, various people were killed by the *Mau Mau* for allegedly being seen as supportive to the British government. In particular, there were Murang'a martyrs, a group that chose to die for the Gospel rather than take *Mau Mau* oaths. At Mutira mission centre, Mr Reuben Kinyua Kaara, pioneer African nurse, was allegedly killed by the *Mau Mau* for failing to treat the members of the gang.

Mutira: 1981-2010

In 1981, Mutira parish was comprised of the following centres: Emmanuel Mutira (headquarters), St. Andrews Kiamaina, St. John's Karimaini, St. James Kabonge, St. Peter's Kamuiru, St. Mark's Mutitu, St. Paul's Getuya, and CPK Kiarugu and CPK Ndiriti. Rev Peter Karanja Njoroge was the parish priest while Rev Amos Karani was the curate (pastoral assistant). The following diagram shows how the parish fared in 1981:

Name	When church was consecrated	Sunday regular attendance	Communicants	Sunday school	Sunday Weekly collections
Emmanuel Mutira	1911	175	140	155	Ksh 80
St. Andrew's Kiamaina	1922	300	200	220	Ksh 200
St. John's Karimaini	1921	200	85	150	Ksh 115
St. James Kabonge	1955	180	130	200	Ksh 160
St. Peter's Kamuiru	1940	150	70	65	Ksh 85
St. Marks Mutitu	1954	200	150	120	Ksh 80
St. Paul's Getuya	1971	100	60	75	Ksh 52
CPK Ndiriti	1966	85	55	80	Ksh 65
CPK Kiarugu	1976	50	20	70	Ksh 45
TOTAL (Average)		1,440	1,110	1,095	Ksh 975

Schools that Were Sponsored by Mutira Parish by 1981

Name	Pupils/Students	Teachers
Kamuiru Primary	924	24
Mutitu Primary	937	22
Karimaini Primary	751	18
Kiamaina Primary	438	17
Mutira Primary	434	16
TOTAL	3, 484	95
Mutira Girls' Secondary	460	17
Kamuiru Boys' Secondary	328	13
Total	788	30

Development Projects for Mutira Parish by 1981

Project Name	Achievements by 1981	Achievements by 2010 & remarks
Health	None	Mutira has a dispensary, constructions going on to make it a hospital
Agriculture	3 churches had coffee farms	Coffee as a cash crop is no longer profitable. Parishes have to devise new ways of generating revenues. They can use their pieces of land to build rental houses for teachers in neighbouring schools, build rental church halls (Mutira has one by 2010!) ; start cyber businesses; hotels, build commercial recreation places, open colleges, academies among others, depending on the locality. Those congregations who have small tea farms have to re-asses their viability in light of the competitiveness that characterises our modern living.
Social Welfare	Only Getuya church (now a parish on its own) had a Multi-purpose Community Centre	By 2010, Emmanuel Mutira had a Church hall, which however needs further modernization. There is need to asses the urgency of building a modern Guest House
Adult literacy	Adult literacy classes were going on at Ndiriti, Mutira, Kiarugu and other places.	Even though these adult classes are already dead, there is need to re-asses whether the old and the new Mutira parish has conquered illiteracy. In other words, how sure that every one can read the Bible in our respective locality. It is also critical to work hand-in-hand with our government with regard to provision of free education for Kenyan children – as we focus on vision 2030 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). In particular, there is need to liaise with the government to ensure that all families take children to school. Again, schools must be conscientized not to overburden parents with extra-payments under various guises such as tuition, coaching and so forth.

As we re-assess the failures and successes of the mission we need to acknowledge that the old Mutira Parish had by 2010 grown from a mere mission Centre to about 7 Archdeacons. That is Mutira, Kerugoya Cathedral, Kiandangae, Thiba, Wang'uru (though not all parishes were in the old Mutira parish) and Karaba Archdeaconry, which is in Mbeere Anglican Diocese. In turn, Karaba Archdeaconry has Gategi Deanery comprising of Gategi, Makima, and Riakanau parishes. Karaba Archdeaconry also has Makutano Deanery which in turn has Makutano, Karaba, and Wango parishes.⁵³

With regard to Mutira Archdeaconry, it had three Rural Deaneries by 2010. That is, Kamuiru with Mutira, Kamuiru and Kabonge parishes; Kiamaina with Ndiriti, Kiamaina and Muragara parishes; and Kamuruana with Kiranja, Kamuruana, Mutuma and Gatwe parishes. Kerugoya Cathedral Archdeaconry had Thaita Deanery with Kangaita, Mugwandi and Thaita parishes; Kiamuthambi deanery with Gakoigo, Kianjogu, Kiamwenja, Kiamuthambi, Gatuto and Mutitu parishes; and Cathedral deanery with Cathedral, Kiaritha and Kimandi parishes.

In 2010 Kiandangae Archdeaconry had Gacaru deanery which has Kahiro, Kinyakiiru, Kiine, Kianjege, Karima, and Githuaini parishes. It also had Kagio deanery, which in turn has Gathuthiini, Kiandangae, Kagio, Kiaga, and Baricho parishes. Karimaini deanery is part of Kiandangae Archdeaconry. In turn, the deanery is comprised of, Karimaini, Kiburu, Getuya, and Kiangoma parishes. With regard to Thiba Archdeaconry, it comprises of Nguka deanery with her Thiba, Mbui Njeru and Nguka parishes; Kangai Deanery with her Kathiga, Kangure, Gitoo-ini, and Kombu-ini parishes; Sagana Deanery with her Sagana, Kandongu, and Rukanga parishes; and Mutithi Deanery with her Mutithi, Ciagini, Kiandegwa and Rurii parishes. Likewise, Wang'uru Archdeaconry which has Gathigiriri deanery comprising of Gathigiriri, Ndindiruku, Wang'uru, and Murubara parishes; Kutus Deanery comprising of Kutus, Kamiigua,

⁵³<http://www.ackkenya.org/dioceses/mbeere.html> (accessed October 2, 2010).

Kithiriti, Kimbimbi, Nyangati and Kiorugari parishes. Wang'uru Archdeaconry also comprises of Rianjuki and Nyamindi deaneries. The latter (Nyamindi and Rianjuki) deaneries were not part of the old Mutira parish of 1911-12. It is also not clear whether Kutus, Kamiigua and Kithiriti parishes of Wang'uru Archdeaconries were in the old Mutira parish.

CHAPTER THREE

The Pioneer African Clergy

Introduction

As noted in the first chapter, the area covered by the old Mutira pastorate is endowed with human resources, material and spiritual resources plus good habitable climate. As noted in our introduction, the area surrounding the missionary centre is near Kagumo Town. It lies between Kerugoya and Karatina Towns. It's rich with fertile soils where coffee and tea are the main cash crops; while dairy farming continues to be an important occupation for the small-scale farmers in the locality. In additions various crops are grown. That is, maize, beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, tomatoes, peas, bananas, avocados, mangoes, oranges, apples etc. With the decline of coffee prices, the locals had by 2010 began to diversify in their economic activities by venturing into small scale businesses so as to meet the challenges of the time.

While it is difficult to account for all the resources in the old Mutira parish, as it is currently comprised of parishes, deaneries, archdeaconries, divisions, locations, districts and even dioceses (refer to parts of Mbeere and Kirinyaga Dioceses), it is significant to survey some case studies of human resources, to which we now turn:

The Pioneer African Clergy

By "The Pioneer African Clergy," it refers to the first local African clergy who set the pace for others by seeking ordination in the sacred ministry. It includes: Rev. Canon Johana Njumbi (1886-1991); Rev. Paul Kibuti (1918 – 1996); Rev. Canon Jason Minja Mwai (1928-

2008); Ven Canon Joseph Mwangi Ngooro (1926 -); and Rev Canon Emeritus Joseph Kangangi Mwanake (1930-2010). We shall attempt to look at each of them. While Canon Njumbi the pioneer African clergy was ordained 1930, Kibuti was ordained in 1960, Minja in 1962, Canon Ngooro in 1964 and Joseph Kangangi, the fifth, was ordained in 1966. The above pentagon of five is the real makers of Christianity in the old Mutira Pastorate which stretched from the Ndia part (comprising of Kirinyaga Central and West Districts) of the current Kirinyaga County, the Western part of Kirinyaga South (read Mwea West) to Riakanau-Makutano of the current Mbeere Anglican Diocese, in the Embu County. Together with Rev Amos Karani who was made an Anglican Deacon in 1971 and priest in 1975, they form a Hexagon of pioneers. But it is in the above pentagon of pioneer African clergy that much impact was greatly felt. In the nature of things, Mutira Mission, which was elevated into a pastorate in 1923, had certainly come of age. With her own sons (no daughters then!) taking responsibilities, as clergy, the mission had moved on to a higher rite of passage.

Rev. Canon Johana Njumbi (1886-1991)

Johana Njumbi is the pioneer African clergy in the old Mutira pastorate. He was born in Mutira location, Ndia Division, in the present day Kirinyaga County in 1886. Born to Mr. Kamuku (Rungu) wa Kibara and mother Wamwirua wa Gakuya, he was named after his paternal Uncle, Mucubi. In turn, the name *mucubi* is derived from the Kikuyu phrase, *gacumbiriri-ini* (meaning hilly or elevated place). His Uncle got his name, *mucubi*, as a result of his constant climbing at the very top of Mururi tree so as to notify the locality whenever the rival Maasai attackers or any rival clan was about to strike the village; and thereby help them react appropriately. He was thus named Njumbi in honour of his paternal Uncle who rendered critical services to the society. Interestingly, Canon Njumbi later came to play the comparable roles with those of his Uncle; for when the missionaries came, he went to the top of the metaphorical Mururi tree and saw the right direction that the society had to take (read

modern education and religiosity). Consequently, he became the beacon that shaped and reshaped the history of his people permanently.¹

With regard to his pedigree, Johana Njumbi's siblings included: Waruguru (Kabuto) Gatune wa Kamonde, Kibara, Gakuru, and Paul Kangi (Baba Isaaka na Silla). Njumbi whose father, Mzee Kamuku, died during his infancy - in 1887, was the last born child in their family. As a result of this early setback in his life times Njumbi learnt to trust in God's providence and sustenance – as he wrestled with the bitter reality that earthly life can be discontinued abruptly - even for those who matter most in the society. Luckily, his Uncle, Mucubi Kibara, took him and gave him the much needed attention and care that he so much needed during his early upbringing. His mother, Wamwirua, died in 1928, during the great earthquake that took place around Mutira area. This was also the period when Mutira Church office was under construction under Rev. Canon W. H. Hillard. By then, Mutira Pastorate, as it was then called, comprised of the entire Ndia Division (today Kirinyaga Central and West), Mwea and parts of Eastern Kenya (refer to Riakanau, Gategi, Karaba among other places). His Uncle, Mucubi, who brought him up, was a *Mundu Mugo* (traditional medicine-man); but by the time he died in 1929, he had already enrolled in catechism classes, ready for baptism, only to die before the rite was administered on him.²

In his childhood days, Njumbi was a herdsboy. In other words, he took good care of his Uncle's livestock. He also loved farming. Sometimes in 1908, one European by name Margereka (refer to McGregor) came to Mutira from Mbiri, later called Fort Hall (refer to Weithaga Mission Station, Murang'a) and bought land where Mutira Anglican Church is built. He bought it from the owner, Karunditu Gitura, for Rupee 30 (about 60 Kenya Shillings then),

¹Information extracted from Canon Njumbi's burial speeches on 3rd August 1991, at his Mugaya farm, near Mutira, Kirinyaga, Kenya.

²Information extracted from Canon Njumbi's burial speeches on 3rd August 1991, at his Mugaya farm, near Mutira, Kirinyaga, Kenya.

roughly 600, 000 shillings in 2012 (about \$7500). He then placed a bill board atop Muthariti tree indicating that he had bought it. He then left for Kabare and Kigari, Embu, where he opened mission centres in 1910. According to Mzee Charles Makumi, this land comprised of 3 acres where the Mutira Church is built and 12 acres where Mutira primary school is located.³ According to him, the land belonged to a member of Mzee Leonard Kunga's immediate family - within the larger Ithimbwi family of Ugaciku clan. Later in 1970s, 12 acres of land were curved from the neighbouring Icamumu family of Ugaciku clan – to build Mutira Girl's Secondary School.

During this early encounter, the missionary team at Mutira was first greeted by tough resistance from one, Mr. Kairang'a and his team, as he claimed ownership of the land that Mutira mission occupies to date. According to Coun Munyi, this resistance delayed the early mission work - as it sent cold shivers down the spines of the missionaries.⁴ Even Johana Njumbi, a member of Ithimbwi family, who was taking care of his Uncle's flock in the locality, came from the bush to see the land transaction notice by the missionaries, climbed the tree, removed it and tore it into pieces and threw it away, even though the message had already been swallowed by the locals – 'that the land has been bought.' Hence this hostility could not have helped Mutira to begin as a mission station before the neighbouring Kigari and Kabare had opened theirs – and where both began in 1910.⁵ In both Kabare-Kirinyaga and Kigari-Embu cases, the missionary team bought land in order to provide space for mission work.

After missionaries fears were settled, Rev Laight (nicknamed by the locals, Kamonde), who had previously served in the vast

³Interview with Mzee Charles Makumi, November 21, 2010, at his Kariko house near Mutira Mission Centre.

⁴Interview with Councillor Karubiu Munyi at Karubiu Munyi buildings, Kerugoya on November 24, 2010.

⁵Information gathered during Canon Njumbi's burial ceremony on 3rd August 1991, at his Mugaya farm, near Mutira, Kirinyaga, Kenya.

regions of Kambaland, was posted to officially open the Mutira Mission Centre on 15th November 1912. As the missionaries settled in Mutira they began a school and a dispensary. To this end, Njumbi entered Mutira primary school in 1915. His class had a total of 60 learners; some of whom included: Philip Karanja Ngungi, Petero Kanjobe (grandfather to Ven. Samuel Murimi Kanjobe of Kirinyaga Anglican Diocese), Hezekiah Ngigi (who went to become the first African medical practitioner in the locality), Zakariah Gakure, Gideon Kibugi (father to Njumbi's wife, Wangari), Musa Nguri and Stefano Kabuitu (father to Leonard Kunga). Some of their teachers included: Rev. Clark and Thomas Meero (Bundi). Having undergone the African rite of adulthood (read circumcision) via Kikuyu customary laws, in 1918, Njumbi recalled his most celebrated age-mate as Mzee Obadiah Tuguti. In the same year, 1918, he got employed as untrained teacher, at Mutira primary school.

Concerning his ecclesiastical life, Njumbi was baptized on 29th February 1920 by Rev. H. J. E. Butcher and named Johana. In the same year, he married a lady by name Wamuruana Matheri, daughter of Kogi from the neighbouring Kiamaina settlement. With Wamuruana, they were blessed with a baby girl called Abijah Wamwirua. Afterwards, Wamwirua died; later the child. Such setbacks did not stop Njumbi from pursuing his dream of liberating his people from ignorance, superstitious beliefs and poverty. For in 1922, he joined Kahuhia preparatory school to train as a teacher for one year. He completed successfully and was awarded a Certificate in Vernacular Studies, and was declared the best student. Subsequently, he was employed as a teacher at Mutira primary school from 1923 to 1929. In his tenure as a primary school teacher, he opened various schools; namely, Kanyeki-ini, Kiamaina, Mukure, Kiburu, Gakoigo, Kiandangae, Gacaru and Ki-ini. Interestingly, Njumbi's success in promoting modern education, which went hand-in-hand with Christianity, was well received across the continent of Africa and Europe for it was unusual, in those dark days of African history, to see a black man championing aggressively the 'whiteman's' education. This earned him admiration of European missionaries

who were stationed at Kabare Centre. To this end, Rev. J. Ramphrey started working out ways and means of getting Njumbi join the ordained ministry of the Anglican Church and thereby spread his education mission while being a clergyman. As a result, Ramphrey organised a parish council meeting, in 1929, to discuss on Johana Njumbi's fate. After the meeting, where Njumbi was readily welcomed to the sacred ministry, it was resolved that Christians living around Mutira area were to contribute towards his theological education. It was also proposed that men should pay 6 Kenya Shillings while women were to pay 3 Kenya shillings. And after the success of this fundraising towards Njumbi's education, he joined St Paul's United Theological College, Limuru (today, St Paul's University) in 1930. He completed his studies in 1934 and was first made an Anglican Deacon by a Bishop who had come from Rwanda. After one year of probation, Njumbi was ordained as an Anglican Priest in 1935, at St. Stephen's Church, Nairobi, by Bishop Richard S. Heywood (1867-1955) of the then Mombasa Diocese, covering Kenya, Zanzibar and Tanganyika. He was assigned the task of superintending the then Mutira Pastorate.

As a clergyman, the Rev. Canon Johana Njumbi is remembered for having initiated the establishment of various schools and churches across the old Mutira pastorate. They include: Riakanau, Thaita, Karimaini, Karaini, Kiaritha, and Kiamuthambi among others. For instance, in establishing Kiamaina church (later St Andrews), as an out-station of Mutira Pastorate, in 1935, Njumbi walked for one hour as he closely monitored his wall clock which he held perceptively. Once the hour was over, he told his assistant: "this is where we shall build another church, as it is imprudent to allow our Christians to be walking for more than an hour before they access a Church [read Mutira Mission Centre]." ⁶ Before then, church elders such as Laban Rukenya, Hosea, Phenehas and others had started an outstation at the site where the present day St. Anne's Kangware church is situated.

⁶Interview with Ven Samuel Murimi Kanjobe, at Kagumo Town, on 28th October 2010.

As the vicar, Johana felt that the distance between Mutira Mission Centre and Gicuka is too close considering that churches were very much scattered. Coupled with this, he also wanted to widen his catchments area.⁷ Thus when he walked for one hour, covering a distance of four miles, he declared to his assistants that the church should be built there. In the nature of things, Njumbi planted a big cross to mark out the place where a new church was to be constructed - a distance of about 6 kilometres North of Mutira Mission Centre. And in a succession of events (read fundraisings, committee meetings, re-strategising etc), St. Andrews Kiamaina Church, later Parish was built in the present site, Kiamaina shopping centre. In all these places where he began schools and churches, Njumbi used to walk or ride his bicycle, as there were very few cars in the country.

Having previously lost his first wife Wamuruana in 1921, Njumbi married Agness Wambui in 1933, the daughter of Gatuai.⁸ Agness and Johana were joined in a holy matrimony by Rev. Shedrack Mulewa from the present Diocese of Taita Taveta. The marriage ceremony was hurriedly done because he could not get ordained as a church minister while he was still a bachelor. This was however unrealistic as he was already a widower. In 1952, Njumbi experienced another setback when Agness died. By then, they had sons and daughters, namely: Joyce Wamwirua, Mary Muthoni, David Kiragu (late), Thomas Muriithi, Elizabeth Kabuto, Jacqueline Wambura, Paul Kinyua, Dionasius Gathaiya, Stanley Gakuru, and Wangui who died during her infancy. In the same year that Njumbi lost his wife, 1952, he retired as a church minister. And this was during the dark period of Kenya's history when the State of Emergency was declared following the arrival of Sir Evelyn Baring, as the governor of Kenya. The immediate cause for its declaration was the brutal killing, October

⁷Interview with Harun Kabugua Rukenya via cell phone on 2nd December 2010.

⁸In turn, Gatuai was a brother to Mabu. They were brought up by Mabu, the father to the great church administrator, the late Mr. James Njogu Mabu.

9, 1952, of Chief Waruhiu from the present day Kiambu County, a known sympathiser and collaborator of the colonial government. Coupled with this, there was general tension in the country following skirmishes between *Mau Mau* (freedom) fighters and colonial forces resulting in much bloodshed.

During those turbulent days, Canon Njumbi went to live at Mutitu Chiefs Camp where he started Mutitu Anglican Church. He also worked hand-in-hand with the serving clergy to counsel the victims of the *Mau-Mau* uprising. At the same time, Njumbi was employed by the government (1952) following his retirement as a Church minister. He travelled in various parts of Kenya preaching equality of human beings before God and humanity. The places he visited included: Hola, Ndundu-ini, Kandongu, and Gathigiriri prison, till 1957 when he retired again. Despite doubling as a Civil Servant and a Clergyman, Njumbi's pioneering role as the first African to be ordained as a priest in 1930, his legacy as a clergyman is seen when Rev. Paul Kibuti was ordained as the second clergyman in the locality, in 1960. In 1962, Rev. Jason Minja was ordained as the third African clergy in the locality. Others included: Rev. Canon Joseph Mwangi Ngooro, 1964; and Rev. Canon Emeritus Joseph Kangangi Mwanake, 1965. By 2011, the area had over one hundred clergy, men and women, with Canon Daniel Munene Ngoru climbing the ladder to become the Diocesan Bishop of Kirinyaga in 1997. Clearly, Njumbi's pionerring efforts were not in vain.

According to Thomas Meero's memoirs, Njumbi's last words, to the Christians of his Mutira pastorate, during his retirement ceremony, on the 18th of August 1952, were: "*Amani na iwe kwenu.*" That is "peace be with you" – thereby echoing the resurrected Christ. In other words, Njumbi was retiring at a very critical moment in Kenya's history when *Mau Mau* uprising had divided the Kikuyu Nation, and Kenya at large, alongside the collaborators/traitors versus the freedom fighters; hence 'peace' wish was critical to everyone. As the villagers butchered one another, and as suspicions and tensions reached their zenith, Njumbi had nothing to offer the flock but 'peace.'

On 20th October 1952, leading African leaders such as Jomo Kenyatta, Ochieng' Oneko, Kung'u Karumba, Paul Ngei and Bildad Kagia were arrested and later sentenced to seven years imprisonment at the remote part of Northern Kenya, Kapenguria, for their alleged involvement in the freedom struggle. At the same time, the state of emergency was declared in the then Kenya colony. It is in light of this that Njumbi moved all over the country preaching peace, after being requested by the colonial government. It is along this background that his critics have constantly accused him of having betrayed the 'commandments' by accepting to carry the gun as he pursued peace in those turbulent days. Certainly, 'desperate times call for desperate measures.' As a matter of fact, it was a common trend for those in leadership positions to carry shot guns - including the white missionaries, particularly to protect themselves from wild animals which occupied the thick forests that surrounded the nation. Mwalimu Thomas Meero, in particular, owned a licensed D.B. shot gun 12 that bore No. 6218. But as he says in his unpublished memoirs, he and Johana Njumbi were disarmed on 28th March 1955. At times, Meero would be called upon to shoot marauding hyenas. This helps us to understand the background within which Njumbi handled a shot gun.⁹

In 1960, Johana Njumbi married Mary Wangari the daughter of Gideon Kabugi. Interestingly, Kabugi was Njumbi's classmate at Mutira primary school since 1915. They were taught by Rev. Laight, Rev. Clark and Thomas Meero. During their marriage ceremony, Njumbi and Wangari had Johana Rukungu and Rose Muthoni Reuben as their sponsors (read best man and best lady respectively). The celebrant was Rev. Johana Muturi. Wangari and Njumbi were blessed with 8 children, namely: Gideon Kabugi, Alexander Kiragu, Joseph Kibara, Stanley Njine (late), Titus Gathutwa, Joyce Wamwirua, Susanne Muthoni and Margaret Wangui.

An interesting dimension to note in Canon Njumbi's life is that he was not only a 'man-of-the-cloth' but more importantly a good

⁹Interview with Mzee Samuel Karani Ruri, 20th June 2010.

farmer and a businessman. As a matter of fact, he was the first person in the locality to trade in wattle-bark (*magoko*) from 1926 to 1959. In turn, wattle-bark is extracted from Wattle tree (*Muthanduku*). He is also the pioneer coffee farmer being member No. 1. He was the first chairman of Mutira Farmers Society (1951-1956); and later 1964 to 1972 he was a committee member. Until 1990, Canon Njumbi never failed to attend meetings that were arranged by the coffee boards. Additionally, Njumbi was the pioneer keeper of daily cattle or high quality cows for milk, popularly called Grade Cows, in 1959, in an area where long horned traditional cattle were then kept. He was a great environmental conservator whose farm in Mugaya village of Kirunda sub-location, has the tallest trees in the larger Ndia Division of Kirinyaga County and Mbeere District of Embu County to date. In his farm, fruits of various brands are available – an inclination that was not broken by the members of his family following his death in July 1991. As a farmer, he pioneered horticultural farming majoring on carrots and cabbages during the Second World War (1943-1946).

Another interesting dimension of Canon Njumbi's life is that his theological stand point did not change with the coming of the East African Revival Movement (popularly called praising or *Tukutendereza* group) which swept across Kenya from Rwanda via Uganda in 1937. According to Canon Joseph Mwangi Ngooro, a strict adherent of the revival movement, Canon Njumbi remained a typical African despite his pioneering role – as a black missionary in Ndia.¹⁰ In particular, he differed with the revivalist view of not keeping dogs for protection – as 'God protects you.' He also differed with the Christian revivalists who propounded their theological position that a Christian did not have to take bank loans or be indebted to anyone or to any institution - as the 'second coming of Christ may find him or her indebted hence rejection due to this un-preparedness.' Above all, he could not understand how Christianity could make an

¹⁰Interview with Canon Joseph Mwangi Ngooro in his farm at Gathuthi-ini, on 27th October 2010.

African to abandon some leisurely African cultural practices such as sniffing of tobacco – which he literally did. He however discarded traditional liquor – as he argued that it makes one to lose his focus, especially when one is intoxicated. Njumbi could also not understand why a Christian could habitually confess Christ as lord and saviour by giving a long testimony about his or her relationship with God rather than leading a ‘practical Christian virtuous life.’ Why should words “be more visible than actions to a Christian? Is this not behaving like the Pharisees whom Jesus dismissed as hypocrites?” Canon Njumbi would wonder. To him, a Christian should be seen attending to the needy cases such as the troubled neighbour, the hungry, thirsty, widowed, orphaned and other marginalised people in society rather than being heard. This approach was not well received by the revivalists who later dominated Anglican Christianity in his locality.

With regard to secondary school education, he was a member of the committee that began Kamuiru Boys among other schools. As a result of his pioneering role in social and ecclesiastical matters, Bishop David Gitari installed him as Canon Emeritus on 4th January 1976 during the great ceremony that officially marked the birth of the Diocese of Mount Kenya East. As a result of old age, Canon Njumbi began to experience body pains and on Monday, 16th July 1991, around 5 p.m., Njumbi was admitted at Kerugoya District Hospital. He died the following Monday, 22nd July 1991 at 5 a. m - leaving behind 15 children, 32 grand children and 7 great grand children. Ven. Ephantus Muriuki officiated his well attended burial ceremony on 3rd August 1991.

As Mutira Anglican Mission marks the first centenary celebration (1912 – 2012), Canon Njumbi, the pioneer African priest, is remembered as one who approached church ministry holistically. That is, he was sensitive and committed to the African Christian Praxis; a person whose theological standpoint did not exclude the wider human context in both physical and moral geography – one who endeavoured to recoil and obliterate the dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual, the secular and the sacred. To this end, he

teamed up with others to build schools, dispensaries, and churches; and attended to issues of human development. He will always be remembered as a pioneer African missionary in the locality, in Mwea and in the larger Ndia Division – an area which currently forms four out of the five Districts of Kirinyaga County. He had a dream of liberating the people of Kirinyaga from ignorance, disease and poverty – a dream which was shared by the pre-independence nationalists of the 1950s and 60s, such as Jomo Kenyatta, Bildad Kagia, Oginga Odinga, Tom Mboya, Achieng' Oneko, Paul Ngei among others. During the land demarcation of the 1957 in Embu District, as the entire Kirinyaga was then part of Embu, he was very disappointed by his fellow clan mates who used shrewd and dubious means to corruptly acquire more pieces of land than others. Reportedly, he wanted to live near the place where Mutira Anglican mission is situated; but his bid to acquire land was foiled by some interested parties within his Ithimbwi family of Agaciku clan, who pushed him four kilometres south of Mutira Anglican mission, that is, Mugaya area. Referring to his Ithimbwi family of his Agaciku clan, where he served as the Chairman till his death, he once cautioned:

Don't be troubled by those who are allocating themselves clan lands in strategic and fertile places by force. Anything that you acquire by force backfires at one stage, as physical might is never permanent; those who are bodily strong will be weak tomorrow; but those who follow justice will realise that a just cause will remain just till eternity.... They push others to the hills and valleys plus other inhabitable places – where it is difficult to settle and build a home. Let them not fret you; they will not go very far - for you cannot be smarter than God. Yes, they can hide under the cover of being freedom fighters or associated with *Mau Mau* movement. Some create the wrong impression that they were more concerned with freedom than anyone else. Who liberated people than us – we who worked hand-in-hand with the missionaries to promote [western] education in Ndia and beyond? They can just choose to be naughty, harass others, and force others with machetes and axes

to vacate certain places – as they claim it is ‘their prime land.’ It is disheartening that they do not want fair distribution of land among the members of the clan. Take it from me [read ‘my prophesy’]: these pieces of land [that] they are forcefully acquiring will never benefit them in anyway [read socially and economically]. They will be despondent even with their illicit land. They will not experience peace – as God hates dirty deals. Who knows? their children or the children of their children may lack meaning for these chunks of land they are dishonestly and cogently acquiring; and hence mismanage them or even sell them later....¹¹

True to his prophecy, most of the illegally acquired land by the greedy lot ended up poorly managed or even sold to other people from outside the locality. As we focus on his life, and the Anglican ministry in the larger Mutira Mission, where he served, his lasting legacies remain. Truly, he is a prophet whose prophecies need to be put in our agenda of the twenty-first century Africa; and like prophet Amos of old, ask ourselves: who has robbed the poor? Who has failed to attend to the marginal of the society: the widows, the orphans, the disabled, the displaced, the refugees, the youth and children? Where are we taking our country – with regard to social justice? How have we addressed our falling education standards – particularly when we compare ourselves with others?

In a song composed, in 2010, by Mutira church choir led by David Murage Justin - in preparation for the 2012 centenary celebrations, Johana Njumbi’s pioneering role is well captured in five poetic stanzas. It goes as follows:

¹¹Strictly speaking, Canon Njumbi’s clan is referred to as “Agaciku a Ngurwe ya Githaku kia Ithimbwi.”

Canon Johana Njumbi <i>1. Umuthi twina kiririkano Gia Canon Njumbi wa Kamuku Uria waninire nduma Ndia Na ngoma nyingi iria ciari kuo.</i> <i>2. Okiraga ruci-ini na Ngware Aikurukite ya Riakanau Ruci-ini ruru rungi ari Ki-ini Ciana cia Ndia igie na githomo.</i> <i>3. Tene twarumagwo Ndia irimu Ringi tugetwo akui Ndoo Canon Njumbi niatuthambirie Riu twi Ndia itangitong'eka.</i> <i>4. Andu a Ndia tukiaria githungu Na riria tukugia Madaraka Tumenyage ati muru wa Kamuku Nianogire tugaikara wega.</i> <i>5. Murata korwo ni unyendete Niukarimira mbirira yakwa Mwendi Canon niamenye atiri Muro wake ni Kirikaniro</i>	Canon Johana Njumbi 1. Today we are commemorating the Achievements of Canon Njumbi son of Kamuku; The one who chased away darkness in Ndia; And exorcised the demons that inhabited Ndia. 2. He used to wake up early in the morning; then move towards Riakanau; Then move to Kiini the following morning; All in his bid to ensure sons and daughters of Ndia get quality education. 3. In the past, we used to be called “the foolish Ndia people”; Sometimes we were called “toilet cleaners” - who carried human emissions in buckets; But thank God, Canon Njumbi has ‘washed’ us clean; Today, no one can easily underrate us. 4. My fellow Ndia people; as we speak English; And as we get various promotions in our lifetimes; Let us always remember that the gallant son of Kamuku worked hard to secure a better future for us. 5. My friend, “if you love me Take care of my graveyard.” Whoever loves Canon Njumbi must know That his working tool is the Bible
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Another notable person in Canon Njumbi’s family is his elder brother, Paul Kangi (popularly called Paulo). In turn, Kangi is the father to Isaaka Kiragu and Cira wa Paulo – the latter is one of the early medical practitioners at Mutira mission. In turn, Isaaka Kiragu is the father to the long serving former secretary of Mutira parish council – Paul Kinyua Kiragu. According to Isabella Wanjiku Githaiga, daughter of Chief Ndegwa Kimere, Kibuti taught them catechism during the early years of Christianity in Mutira. That is, 1937 to 1940s. He was an evangelist/catechist who retired out of old age during the war of independence (1950s). Isabella notes that he was very lively and/or dynamic. He tried to persuade his audiences to abandon traditional African dances; and join the church. In his teaching methodology which was heavily punctuated with humour, he propounded the view that people must accept the reality that the wind has blown and altered the direction of the locality. Whoever failed to accept the new reality was simply wasting time – as

Christianity had come to stay in Africa. How can they resist a marriage whose burns have been announced appropriately; and why would somebody think that marriage is a temporal business?¹² By using such analogies, Kibuti's message came powerfully and greatly impacted on the locality.

Rev. Paul Kibuti (1918 – 1996)

Rev. Paul Kibuti is the second African clergy in the larger Mutira pastorate. He was ordained as an Anglican priest by Bishop of Mombasa, Leonard J. Beecher, in 1960. While Canon Njumbi's ancestral home was just near Mutira Mission Centre; Kibuti came from Mukinduri area near Mutitu Chief's camp, along Baricho-Kerugoya road. Mukinduri and Mutira Mission are 8 kilometres (6 miles) apart. He was born around 1918 and later trained as a teacher.

In 1954 Rev. Paul Kibuti took over as Vicar-in-charge. Previously, Kibuti was a teacher at Mutira primary school and had officially reported on 30th July 1948. At the same time, he doubled as a member of the committee of Mutira Pastorate, which was headed by Rev. Johana Njumbi, a moment that probably inspired him to join church ministry. As a Vicar during the turbulent days of Kenya's struggle for independence, he witnessed people being sanctioned by the colonial government to dig trenches (*Mucingi*) around the protected areas so as to keep *Mau-Mau* fighters out of the homes and thereby confine them to the forests and probably die there out of hunger. It was also the government way of confining people to the villages, just as Adolf Hitler did during the Nazi Germany in 1930s. Interestingly, Kibuti refused to allow *Mucingi* (trench) to be dug around Mutira church as he argued that God's protection is sufficient for him, hence he did not need more from the trench. To this end, he earned lots of admiration from the troubled locals. For 'defying' an

¹²Interview with Isabella Wanjiku Githaiga, daughter of Chief Ndegwa Kimere, at her Kandegwa-Muragara house, north of Mutira mission on 21st November 2010.

unpopular government sanctioned order, locals frocked the church with a sense of pride for their church leader.

Kibuti, who had replaced Rev. Nathaniel Gacira (1953-54), did not however make it for a long time as an Anglican clergyman in Mutira pastorate. Following his posting as the Vicar of Mutira parish, in 1954, he was eventually accused of impregnating a parishioner, a blind lady, in 1958, and eventually suspended in 1961. While the research could not establish specific information concerning the scandal that allegedly brought his ministry in the Anglican Church down, it was however able to verify that Kibuti first returned to his teaching career, posted at Kangaru – Embu and later at Kombu-ini primary school, Mwea, in his home district. In his burning desire to serve in the Church, Kibuti abandoned teaching for the second time and defected from the Anglican and joined *The Church of Christ in Africa*. In turn, *The Church of Christ in Africa* was a new outfit whose origin was in Western Kenya but had a branch at Mukinduri, his home area. With its headquarters in Kisumu city, it was headed by Mathew Ajuoga. Luckily for Kibuti, he was elevated to the senior post of an Archdeacon.

Later in 1969, Archdeacon Kibuti disagreed with his senior, Archbishop Mathew Ajuoga, and broke away to form *The African Church of Jesus Christ in Kenya*. Here, he was ultimately elevated to the post of an Archbishop. Conversely, though he claimed to be leading an African instituted church, he could not clearly tell the difference between his church and the church he had defected from – Anglican. When pressed to state the doctrinal differences, he admitted that there was none! By 2010, *The Church of Christ in Africa* had three congregations in the Diocese of Kiamuthambi. That is:

Kiamuthambi	-	Headquarter
Rukenya	-	Gichugu
Kangu	-	Near Samson corner

Following the death of Archbishop Kibuti, in March 1996, Isaac Kithibe Warui took over the leadership mantle of the church (CCA).

At the turn of the millennium, Francis Kiragu Kibuti, son to Archbishop Kibuti, took over the leadership of CCA and turned it into a Pentecostal outfit today. As a result, CCA changed its name to *The African Church of Jesus Christ* (ACJCK) and by 2010; it was changed to *The Church of Christ* (CC) under Bishop Francis Kiragu Kibuti.

Going back to the events that drove Rev. (later Archbishop) Paul Kibuti out of the Anglican Church, it is critical to recall that when allegations that he had impregnated one of his 'faithful' flocks were first made open, he denied it oughtlightly blaming it on the enemies of the Gospel of Christ. But issue dragged on, Bishop Obadiah Kariuki suspended him from ecclesiastical duties. While under suspension, Kibuti left the Anglican Church completely, as he complained that witch-hunt had befogged the church, thereby killing the vision and mission of the Anglican Church. This early setback shows the pain of the birth of an African church, a pain that had to be overcome by perseverance and trusting in God at all times.

True to Kibuti's fears that "suspensions were being made before one was proved guilty thereby convicting him in the public eye [even] before ones' case was duly heard and determined by a competent judge," Mutira Parish underwent another serious setback soon after his demise. That is, the two clergy who were posted in 1964 (Revs. Johana Muturi and Bernard Kamau) got engaged in a bitter tug-of-war thereby embarrassing the church all the more. Was the church under punishment for pushing Kibuti out just after listening to a mere rumour, yet even the lady who framed him reportedly apologised to him, in 1980s, for 'being used by powerful forces' to oust him?¹³ Were the ancestors pleading for Kibuti and thereby compelling her to admit her guilt and apologise – though it was already late? Or was it the case of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's devil on the cross, or was the church itself being put on the cross? Rev.

¹³Mrs Priscila Kibuti, Paul's wife, revealed during the June 2010 interviews that after the scandal involving the lady in question, it was revealed that she had been bribed to implicate his husband.

Johana Muturi who was the priest-in-charge was, from Embu; while Rev. Bernard Kamau came from Gathukeini, Murang'a - a Kikuyu; and was the Curate of the Parish. While Muturi had been posted at Mutira earlier, Rev. Kamau was posted in 1964.

Interestingly, Muturi, the Vicar, was favoured by the elderly while Kamau was favoured by the Parish youths. As a result, tensions build up and none was able to control it. As a result, the report reached Bishop Obadiah Kariuki who took action by transferring both of them to other parishes in July 1965. To use Kibuti's words, as this case resembles his, transfers as a form of disciplinary action were being made before "one was proved guilty thereby convicting him before the public eye [even] before ones' case was duly heard and determined by a competent judge." As the parish marks its first centenary (1912-2012), annals of history do not have the correct information on who was guilty. Was Kamau and Muturi 'fighting' just because they were from distinct ethnic grouping? Who provoked the other? Does the church act on rumours? Wasn't one guilty of provoking the other and thereby demeaning each others' ministry? Wasn't it oversimplifying the matter by punishing both of them rather than punishing the one who 'initiated' the divisions in the parish?

Subsequently, Bishop Kariuki called Rev. Joseph Mwangi Ngooro who was by then a lecturer (and later the principal, 1969) of McGregor Theological College, Weithaga, in the present day Murang'a County, and posted him there, without a Curate. Such setbacks remind us of Kiburu church, an outstation of Mutira pastorate, where church differences led to schism - and had some members forming an African independent church.

Rev. Canon Jason Minja Mwai (1928-2008)

Rev. Jason Minja Mwai is the third indigenous clergy in the old Mutira pastorate. Minja, as he was commonly known, was born in 1928 at Kiandangae area of Ndia Division of Kirinyaga County. He got his primary school education at Kiandangae, where he sat for his Kenya African Primary Education (KAPE) school certificate in 1950s. During those days, when British colonialism was at its peak,

there was separate development (read apartheid) in social and educational matters commonly called colour bar. In the order of events, there were three classifications of education offered in the Kenya colony, namely: European Education, Asian and African Education hence KAPE. In this scenario, Asian Education was seen to be superior to African Education just as the European Education was seen as superior to the Asian Education.

After studying at Kiandangae primary school, Jason Minja joined Macgregor Theological College, Weithaga, in the present day Murang'a County, from 1960 – 1961. Here, he was to prepare for ordained church ministry for two years. Unfortunately, he was not immediately ordained after a successful completion of his studies at McGregor College, in 1961. Why? The elders of Kiandangae parish apparently petitioned to higher offices of the church indicating that he was unfit for the sacred ministry because his parents were adherents of African indigenous religion. Again, it was alleged that they used to cook thick traditional brew popularly called *Marwa*. Curiously, in those days, a person's calling to the sacred ministry could be delayed or hampered altogether by ones' parentage, family or by communal interests.

In his very difficult year of uncertainty, Minja finally got consoled when, one, Mr. Douglass Kanja, a church elder, broke rank with the rest of the elders and gallantly pushed Minja's agenda for ordination. To do this, he visited Bishop Obadiah Kariuki, of Mount Kenya – as Kirinyaga was then part of the larger Mount Kenya Diocese. In the petition to the Bishop, Kanja put to the attention of the Bishop that the Kirinyaga side of the Diocese was disadvantaged or even discriminated with regard to the number of clergy that came from there. He explained that Minja could not be blamed for his parents' 'sin' of rejecting Christian religion in preference to African religion. After all, is there a prophet who is readily accepted in his own homestead? He argued that the serving evangelists and clergy were to blame for failing to evangelise and thereby convert Minja's parents and not the reverse. "Why not congratulate Minja for defying his parents and accepting the God of Christendom, rather than blame

him for their ‘mistakes’ – yet they can also decide for themselves and join us [and become Christians]? And why didn’t the church prepare Minja psychologically in advance, as they trained him, and probably make it clear to him that his salvation and Christian ministry is pegged on the faith or the lack of it, of his parents? And if so, how can a person be saved and truly accept the God of Christendom without any strings attached?” he asked the attentive Bishop.¹⁴ He also put to the attention of the Bishop that by failing to ordain Minja and make him a Diocesan worker, the church would be at a loss economically as lots of money had already been spent on his education. “Why burn lots of money in training Minja and then tell him, ‘look, your parents have sinned..., and so, you have also sinned, probably by extension’?” he wondered.

After listening to Kanja’s diatribe, Bishop Kariuki was very much impressed by his arguments and wondered why the majority of the elders who were blocking his ordination from Kiandangae were not seeing sense in the above arguments. Knowing that the debate about Minja’s case could drag the church to uncontrollable proportions, Bishop Kariuki invoked his powers as the duly elected Bishop and decreed that “there will be no more debate; Minja, will be ordained for according to a common kikuyu proverb, a “hardworking child does not lack adoptive parents.” At the end of the year, precisely 17th December 1961, Kariuki made him an Anglican Deacon.

In this regard, it is imperative to acknowledge that Deacons in Anglican Church are not ordained; rather, they are made. In other words, the office of a Deacon is the first serious stage to ordination – as the Deacon is allowed to wear a Clerical shirt and a collar. He or she is also addressed as Reverend so and so; hence, lay people may not easily differentiate between an Anglican Deacon and a full Priest. The deacon is however limited in his or her duties. For instance, he or she can only baptize children, cannot solemnize weddings, and

¹⁴Interview with Rev. Symon M. Kigundu at Gathuthi-ini, 27th October 2010.

in some cases, cannot be in charge of a parish. The Anglican constitution however empowers the Bishop to use his/her discretion to allow a Deacon to carry out some of the above mentioned duties, particular if a Diocese has a shortage of ordained Clergy.

On 2nd December 1962 Rev. Minja was ordained as a full priest and was elevated to a parish vicar in January 1963. Since 1963, to 2006 when he was a church minister, he served in the following parishes: Kiandangae; Kagaari; Kiambaa; Kiru; Mutira; Ngiriambu; Iyeyo; Moyale; Thiba; Karaba; Marsabit; Kiine; Karumandi; Kiaga; and Kagio among other places. Rev. Minja, who was later made a Canon by Bishop Gitari in 1980s, was married to Cecily. Though born at Kiandangae, North West of Kirinyaga, he settled at Ciagini in Mwea Division in the Southern part of Kirinyaga County. By the time of his death in 2008, Minja had played his part exceedingly well, displaying high level of forbearance and maturity to his parishioners. Even though some of his critics accuse him of lacking much in creativity, Minja's ability to stomach divergent views, some of which were obnoxious to him shows that the African church of the twenty-first century has something to learn from him. After all, Minja had the courage to forgive the elders who sought to block him from the sacred ministry in the 1960s. Reportedly, some became his ministerial confidants – a foot we may need to learn from him.

Ven Canon Joseph Mwangi Ngooro (1926 -)

Ven Canon Joseph Mwangi Ngooro is the fourth indigenous clergyman in the old Mutira pastorate to be ordained as a full priest. It is not clear when Canon Mwangi, as he is popularly called, was born as his parents, Ngooro Njegegu and Faith Wangu, did not keep records, considering that the impact of modern education, in his Gacharu locality, had not been fully felt by then. Educated people in his locality however suggested 1930 as the most probable year of his birth although he says that 1926 is the most likely year of his birth. The earlier date is informed by his having recorded the year of birth as March 3, 1930 so as to avoid being taken to the forest to fight the British government during the State of Emergency in Kenya

(1950s). In this regard, as the Mau-Mau fighters recruited their army to wage guerrilla war against the colonial government, Mwangi at 20 could not be picked as preference could only be given to people who were above 25.

Canon Mwangi first joined Gacharu Primary school in 1940. He did not go far with education as he found himself in sharp disagreement with one of the influential teachers and was thereby forced to drop out of school in 1946. He was to return to school in 1949 when he was almost twenty years old after the local chief issued an order that any young person who was below 20 years must enrol in the nearby school. Thus, he gained entry to Standard One in 1949 and went on to pass the Kenya African Primary Education (KAPE) in 1957. From Gacharu primary school, he joined the prestigious Kangaru High School (1958 – 1961) and later St. Paul's United Theological College, Limuru, in 1962 and graduated with a college certificate in 1964. In 1966, he joined Oak Hill Theological College, London, where he got another certificate in theological studies. From 1989 to 1990, he studied a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Biblical theology by correspondence at Brussels, Belgium. He later enrolled for a Masters programme with the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Nairobi-Kenya graduating with a Master of Divinity and a Graduate Diploma in Education in 1991. Between 1992 and 1993, he took a course on inculturation, Social justice and Mass Media at the Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa as well as personal liberation psychology among other courses.

With regard to his ecclesiastical life, Canon Ngooro accepted the God of Christendom on 26th August 1956, at the height of political skirmishes in the land. This was bitterly resisted by friends and relatives, and particularly his father (Ngooro Njegegu) and mother (Faith Wangu). In turn, Faith and Ngooro could have feared that his son was trying to escape cultural responsibility in the pretext that the Gospel forbids this or that – as some were doing. As they opposed his move, they were doing so on rational grounds that African cultural heritage calls younger people to be responsible and reliable to the community – as a way of guaranteeing future for the family and the

society at large. This was a common fear among families of young men who embraced Christianity.

This compares with Mr Cleopas Karimi wa Mwara s/o Karuru whose mother, Kethi, checked on his ‘strong’ leanings towards the Roman Catholic Church – as she feared that he may end up a Roman Catholic ‘Father’ (as Catholic priests are commonly called) and thereby fail to marry and procreate; hence deny continuity to the family. At one time, she confronted his son, Karimi, and without mincing words told him that curse would befall him if he becomes a Roman Catholic priest – as they don’t allow marriage. “You can do anything in the church but not going for priesthood as this is tantamount to sacrificing our family lineage.” She warned him. Cleopas Karimi, a devout Catholic who by 2011 was teaching at Mutira primary school, had to focus on teaching profession instead.

In the case of Canon Ngooro, when he converted to Christianity, he also felt called to serve in God’s vineyard even though he was in class 7. Fortunately for him, unlike in the case of Cleopas Karimi, the Anglican Church encouraged clergy to get married before getting any ministerial position. As a matter of fact, theological training was not allowed for the unmarried people. But when his turn came to join the ordained ministry, after completing O-Level education at Kangaru secondary school, in 1961, Ngooro was assisted by the local parish priest, Rev Felix Nyoro, who pushed Ngooro’s agenda strongly by convincing both the local Church and the Parish Councils to endorse his bid for ministerial training even if he was not yet married. This vicar was to later become his father-in-law. Did the Vicar know something that the Parish council members could not know? Was there a deal between the Vicar, Ngooro and the Vicar’s daughter? Was the Vicar pushing the agenda of an arranged son-in-law to be? Was Mwangi wa Ngooro qualified to join the sacred ministry? Were church regulations bent to fit a person? Does the history of his church ministries turn the vicar down? Or was it just the work of the Holy Spirit who works in such mysteries? Only those who worked closely with Canon Ngooro can answer this. Certainly, Mwangi wa Ngooro was a fine minister of the church

who was later promoted to a canon, a Rural Dean and Archdeacon among other high ranking ecclesiastical positions.

After the local church council and the parish council, the Bishop's examining chaplains cleared Mwangi wa Ngooro, after thorough interrogations. Subsequently, he successfully joined St. Paul's United Theological College (currently called St. Paul's University), Limuru, in January 1962. In 1964, he was made an Anglican Deacon; and was ordained as an Anglican priest in July 1965. As a Deacon, he was posted by Bishop Kariuki to teach at Weithaga Theological School. He was also given the responsibilities of serving as a Curate in the neighbouring Weithaga parish. After priesting, he was sent to Mutira parish as a Vicar and made the Education Secretary in the then Kirinyaga District, now County. Here at Mutira, the church was badly divided between the youth and the elderly Christians. This scenario had emerged after Rev. Johana Muturi, the Vicar, was favoured by the older Christians; while Rev. Bernard Kamau, the Curate, was favoured by the youthful and the dynamic parishioners. In each of the two contesting groups, a clergy was only relevant if he appealed to their age. In the nature of things, some would walk out of the church whenever a priest whom they did not favour went to the pulpit.

When Rev Ngooro was posted there in 1965, after both of them were transferred to other parishes in the diocese, most Christians feared that the youthful-looking Mwangi would only serve Kamau's youthful group; but God helped him to serve all plausibly and impartially. Other than a divided congregation, a second challenge that Canon Wa Ngooro, as he is fondly called, encountered was that the Church building was almost collapsing. They had to start working towards its reconstruction – something which they did successfully. The third challenge was that the parish was too big to be ministered effectively. In particular, its congregations included: Mutira (the headquarter), Kiamaina, Kabonge, Karimaini, Getuya, Gakoigo, Kanyeki-ini (Kiamuthambi), Gatuto, Kerugoya, Gitumbi, Kiaritha, Kamuiru, Karai-ini, Gatwe, Mutuma, Kiranja (though they worshipped under a tree), Ndiriti (though services were held in a

school classroom), Mutitu and Mukinduri. Today, 2011, all these congregations have been elevated to full parishes with pastors posted there to serve. They also have permanent church buildings, some with a vicarage, an office, a guest house and even dispensaries built within their compounds; others have nursery schools and kindergartens being run by the church, among other projects.

The fourth challenge that Rev. Ngooro experienced at Mutira was on how to supervise the over two hundred Anglican schools in the district. This was partly addressed when the Anglican Church handed over schools to the Government; and the church was only tasked to sponsor the schools, providing pastoral oversight without necessarily managing the school on day-to-day basis. The fifth concern was how to recruit new schools: both primary and secondary schools, to Anglican sponsorship. This was indeed a challenge as competition for school sponsorship among the mainline churches was stiff. For example, every effort had to be done to get Mutira and Karoti Girls' secondary schools with the help of local Christians. In mooted the idea of building Mutira Girls' Secondary School, in 1965, Rev. Ngooro was assisted by: Erastus Mwai Ngunju; James Njogu Mabu; Johnson Gituma Ndegwa; Henry Kuruga Mugi; Leonard Mwangi Kathuki; Josephat Mbanya; Gerishon Matiti; and Habel Kibue. Other people who came over to ensure the success of the secondary school included: Councillor Karubiu Munyi and Josphat Gathogo. As Munyi recalls, it is the duo who built the first two classes; for while Munyi gave out money, Gathogo who had trained at the then NTD Kabete in the late 1930s as a contractor/masonry, built freely – as he paid his team of workers.¹⁵ Despite the opposition, Ngooro was convinced that Mutira Girls' Secondary School would turn out to be a dream comes true.

The sixth challenge that Rev. Ngooro experienced while at Mutira parish (1965-66) was that he had to go overseas for parish experience in a different cultural set up. In particular, when he

¹⁵Interview with Councillor Karubiu Munyi, at Karubiu Munyi buildings, Kerugoya, on 24th November 2010.

travelled to England he enrolled for a degree programme in London University; but when this was discovered in his home Diocese of Mount Kenya, he was called back. His seniors' short sighted argument, in halting his studies, was that there was no need for a degree. He returned home a bitter person. It was however consoling when he enrolled with International Correspondence Institute, Brussels.¹⁶ In this Institute, they agreed to transfer his credits from

¹⁶**Brussels** is the *de facto* capital of Belgium and of the European Union (EU). It is also the largest urban area in Belgium, comprising 19 municipalities, including the municipality of the City of Brussels, which is the *de jure* capital of Belgium, in addition to the seat of the French Community of Belgium and of the Flemish Community. Brussels has grown from a 10th-century fortress town founded by a descendant of Charlemagne into a metropolis of more than one million inhabitants. The metropolitan area had, by 2011, a population of over 1.8 million, making it the largest in Belgium. In turn, Charlemagne (742-814) was King of the Franks from 768 and Emperor of the Romans (*Imperator Romanorum*) from 800 to his death in 814. He expanded the Frankish kingdom into an empire that incorporated much of Western and Central Europe. During his reign, he conquered Italy and was crowned *Imperator Augustus* by Pope Leo III on 25 December 800. This temporarily made him a rival of the Byzantine Emperor in Constantinople. His rule is also associated with the Carolingian Renaissance, a revival of art, religion, and culture through the medium of the Catholic Church. Through his foreign conquests and internal reforms, Charlemagne helped define both Western Europe and the Middle Ages. He is numbered as **Charles I** in the regnal lists of Germany, the Holy Roman Empire, and France. Since the end of the Second World War, Brussels has been a main centre for international politics. Hosting principal EU institutions as well as the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the city has become the polyglot home of numerous international organisations, politicians, diplomats and civil servants. Although historically Dutch-speaking, Brussels became increasingly French-speaking over the 19th and 20th centuries. Today a majority of inhabitants are native French-speakers, and both languages have official status. Linguistic tensions remain, and the language laws of the municipalities surrounding Brussels are an issue of considerable controversy in Belgium.

the London University thereby enabling him to graduate later with a Bachelor of Arts in Biblical theology. As noted above, he later enrolled for a Masters programme in Nairobi upon his return to Kenya.

In 1985 Rev. Ngooro left Mount Kenya East Diocese and joined the Diocese of Nairobi; by then, headed by Archbishop Manases Kuria. It is here that he was made an Anglican Canon and an Archdeacon in 1986. Previously, he had served in various parishes in Kenya. They include: St. Francis Karen – 1986, St. Mark Westlands -1993 to 1995; Kagaari – 1977; Embu – 1977; Kabati – 1979; Kiburu – 1981-84; Njuki-ini – 1985 among others. In 1996 and 1997 he was serving at St. Stephen's Jogoo Road. He retired from the Ministry in 1997. From there, he rested at home from 1998 to 1999; but sometimes in 1999, Bishop Dr Gideon Githiga of Thika Anglican Diocese invited him to serve in Thika Diocese. Subsequently, he was posted at Gitema Parish, 2000 – 2002. In 2003 (to 2003), he was posted at Weiteithi parish. In the year 2004 (2005), he was posted at St. Andrews' Thika Cathedral as a provost. He later requested that the Bishop accepts his retirement, which ultimately took place in 2005. In a visit to his farm at Guthuthi-ini one notes a very active farmer, whose compound is a beehive of activities, as people of all walks of life seek all sorts of advice and counsel. Some need him as a prayer warrior, others seek farming techniques; others come to ask more about the school that his wife runs in the nearby Kagio Town. In and out of active ministry, his life times are inspirational hence worth envying.

In summary, Rev. Ngooro served the church (1965 to 2005), as:

- Vicar in 28 parishes within the Dioceses of Mt. Kenya South, Mt. Kenya East, Nairobi, Nakuru and Thika,
- Rural Dean in 22 parishes
- Archdeacon in Nairobi diocese; and where he was the only Archdeacon - with 42 parishes under his stewardship. In other words, he was in reality an assisting 'bishop' who never got consecrated into that office – as his working net of service was well spread out.

- Tutor and principal of McGregor Weithaga Theological College; and as part-time lecturer at St. Andrews' College of Theology and Development, Kabare.

On the whole, Canon Mwangi wa Ngooro has been hailed as a great evangelist who planted various churches/congregation, who conducted mass weddings in a manner that one can boldly say, he broke the record that will take time before it is broken by another person. His teaching prowess at Weithaga, where he taught Rev. Jephthah Gathaka, has been hailed as legendary. An interview, at his farm at Gathuthi-ini, on 28th October 2010, he recalled an incident in 1965, where he conducted a church service under a tree in Kiranja. Today, Kiranja church is one of biggest church buildings in the region. He also recalled his ministry in Nairobi Diocese where, as the only Archdeacon, he started with only 6 parishes in 1986 but by 1997, there were 42 parishes. Again, he was the only Archdeacon in 1986 but in 2011, there were 6 Archdeacons. Concerning his legendary-ness in conducting Mass Weddings, he became a household name in the Anglican Communion, in 1980, at Kabare parish, when he conducted 264 weddings in a day. He was only beaten by one Japanese clergy who reportedly conducted 266. Such records may take time before they are matched by an equal performer like him.

In the pentagon of founding clergy, Canon Mwangi is the only one who is still alive. He is also the only one who served in both the rural and the urban churches, that is Nairobi, Kirinyaga and Murang'a among other places. In retirement, his wife is a keen investor at Kagio Township; and all his children are successful graduates in various professional fields, one of whom (Steve Maina) works abroad with international church bodies. Previously, Steve Maina Mwangi was the General Secretary of Church Army, East

Africa. Since 2008, Rev Steve Maina Mwangi is the General Secretary of Church Mission Society, New Zealand.¹⁷

¹⁷**New Zealand** is an island country in the south-western Pacific Ocean comprising two main landmasses (the North Island and the South Island) and numerous smaller islands. The country is situated some 1,500 kilometres (900 mi) east of Australia across the Tasman Sea, and roughly 1,000 kilometres (600 mi) south of the Pacific island nations of New Caledonia, Fiji, and Tonga. Due to its remoteness, it was one of the last lands to be settled by humans. During its long isolation New Zealand developed a distinctive fauna dominated by birds, many of which became extinct after the arrival of humans and introduced mammals. With a mild maritime climate, the land was mostly covered in forest. The country's varied topography and its sharp mountain peaks owe much to the uplift of land and volcanic eruptions caused by the Pacific and Indo-Australian Plates clashing underfoot. New Zealand is organised into 11 regional councils and 67 territorial authorities for local government purposes; these have less autonomy than the country's long defunct provinces did. Nationally, executive political power is exercised by the Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister. Queen Elizabeth II is the country's head of state and is represented by a Governor-General. The Queen's Realm of New Zealand also includes Tokelau (a dependent territory); the Cook Islands and Niue (self-governing but in free association); and the Ross Dependency, New Zealand's territorial claim in Antarctica. New Zealand is a member of the Pacific Islands Forum, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, United Nations, Commonwealth of Nations, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The majority of New Zealand's population is of European descent; the indigenous Māori are the largest minority, followed by Asians and non-Māori Polynesians. English, Māori and New Zealand Sign Language are the official languages, with English predominant. Much of New Zealand's culture is derived from Māori and early British settlers. Early European art was dominated by landscapes and to a lesser extent portraits of Māori. A recent resurgence of Māori culture has seen their traditional arts of carving, weaving and tattooing become more mainstream. Many artists now combine Māori and Western techniques to create unique art forms. The country's culture has also been broadened by globalisation and increased immigration from the Pacific Islands and Asia. New Zealand's diverse landscape provides many opportunities for outdoor pursuits and has provided the backdrop for a number of big budget movies.

**Rev. Canon Emeritus Joseph Kangangi Mwanake
(1930-2010)**

Canon Joseph Kangangi Mwanake is the fifth Clergyman in the old Mutira pastorate. While Rev. Canon Joseph Mwangi Ngooro was ordained in 1964, Kangangi, as he was commonly called by his maiden name, was made an Anglican Deacon in 1965; and later ordained as an Anglican priest in 1966. Born in 1930, at Kirunda Village, Kirunda sub-location, Mutira Location, Ndia Division, in the present day Kirinyaga County, Canon Kangangi attended Kathuri School and later joined Church Mission Society (CMS) Mutira Primary School. He then proceeded to Kangaru secondary school. He married Beatrice Wanjiku at a Civil Wedding conducted at the District Commissioner's (D.C.s) office, Embu, on 2nd July 1955. Together Kangangi and Wanjiku bore eight children, namely: Jane Nyawira, Ephraim Muriithi, Timothy Kinyua, Mary Muthoni, Peter Kariuki, Pauline Wangeci, Francis Nyamu and Simon Njikari. His parents were Ephraim Mwanake Kabiru and Jane Wanduru. Joseph and Beatrice later celebrated their golden jubilee on 2nd July 2006.

Professionally, he began his public life as a teacher after training at Tumu Tumu Teachers' Training College, from 1957 to 1958. After training as a teacher Kangangi first taught at Mutitu primary school and later Kiamaina in 1955. It is from there that he felt called to serve as a church minister. To this end, he joined St. Paul's United Theological College, Limuru, in 1963 and successfully completed his 3 years training in 1965. He later joined Trinity College, Nairobi, to further his theological education, for four months. In 1976, he was invited to St. George's College in Jerusalem (Israel) for general ministerial exposure, a period of four months.

In 1964, Kangangi was made an Anglican Deacon by Bishop Obadiah Kariuki; after which he assumed the title Reverend Kangangi. In 1966, he was ordained as an Anglican priest by Bishop Kariuki. Subsequently, he served in the following parishes as the priest-in-charge. They include: Kabete Parish – 1966; Mutira Parish - August 1966 to 1970; Njumbi (Murang'a) 1971 to 1972; Githunguri (Muranga) - 1972 to 1974; Othaya Parish – 1975; Kiandagae Parish

-1976 to 1978; Ngariama Parish - 1978 to 1979; Kiamuthambi and Kirinyaga North Deanery – 1983; Kagio Parish & Kiandangae Parish (Deanery) - 1984 – 1986.

Rev. Kangangi retired from active church service on medical grounds in 1987, but was recalled to the ministry by Bishop Gitari in 1991. He was posted at Kiranja parish and served from 1991 to 1992. He was later transferred to Getuya Parish – as he also served as the Rural Dean of Karima-ini Deanery from 1993 to 1994. He finally served Kiranja Parish from 1995 to 1996. Previously, Rev. Kangangi served as the Religious Adviser (R.E.A) in the then Mount Kenya East Deanery (1966 to 1970). He also served as a CCEA and an honorary secretary for schools in Mt. Kenya East diocese and Kirinyaga diocese from 1980 – 1982.

On the occasion of his retirement on 4th January 1997, at Kiranja Parish, he was honoured for his distinguished services by being made Canon Emeritus of the Anglican Church by Bishop (later Archbishop) David Gitari. Hence forth, his full title became Rev. Canon Emeritus Joseph Kangangi Mwanake. Slightly before his final retirement from ecclesiastical duties in 1997, he became a member of the Land Tribunal dispute at Baricho, from 1996 to 2003. He later served in the same capacity at Kerugoya from 2004 to 2006. Coupled with this, he was the Patron of St. Peters Kamuiru Church, playing the unofficial role of Youth counsellor, and occasionally addressing the gatherings via the pulpit.

With regard to secondary school education, Canon Emeritus Kangangi worked hand-in-hand with other concerned people to see to it that Mutira Girls' Secondary school was born in the 1970s. By 2011, it was one of the leading schools in Kirinyaga County and Kenya at large. In general, he encouraged the youth to take education seriously, enroll in schools, colleges and universities, as no nation can prosper without morally upright educated men and women. Like the missionaries of the past, read Dr. David Livingstone, Kangangi appeared to favour the 3Cs *modus operandi* in the growth of the society. That is, Christianity to him aided in moral development. It also went hand-in-hand with education and civilization – a feat that

earned critics for him. I remember listening to a person from his former Kiamuthambi parish telling me that “Rev. Kangangi was too daring and sometimes irritating when addressing issues that retarded civilization or the general development of the society. He would pass through our farms, during his pastoral visitations, and would sometimes shout to us ‘...you people of Kanyeki-ini area, have you stopped brewing the retrogressive *Marwa* (traditional brew), accept Christ, civilization and modern education? If you fail to change and accept modernity [referring to modern commerce, education and Christianity], you will remain backward.’” Such daring and open-minded way of stating his mind earned him critics and detractors alike. Some could not understand why he painted all people from Kanyeki-ini Location, which was part of his Kiamuthambi parish, with one brush. Nevertheless, he communicated his ideas innocently and did not want to pretend on any issue. Open ‘diplomacy’ was his way of conducting ecclesiastical duties.

Canon Kangangi fell ill on the morning of 6th May 2010 and was rushed to Jamii Hospital, Karatina, in Nyeri County, where he was admitted. He passed on – on the night of Sunday, 9th May 2010. Thousands of Christians attended the burial ceremony as he was given a warm send off at his Mugaya farm on Tuesday, 18th May 2010. The diocesan house of clergy, led by the Vicar- General, Rev. Canon Dr. Moses Mwangi Njoroge, was well represented during the burial ceremony. Additionally, political leadership in the district, led by the former State house comptroller - in the Mwai Kibaki led government in Kenya (2003 to 2006), Hon Matere Keriri, was in attendance.

Rev. Amos Karani (1941-)

Rev. Amos Karani Samoson is the sixth clergyman from the old Mutira pastorate which stretched through Mwea and Riakanau in the present day Mbeere District. He comes from Kombu-ini, Mwea, of Kirinyaga South. He was born in 1941. He started schooling in 1948 in the then Mio Primary School, later renamed Kombui-ini

primary school. It is at Kombo-ini primary where he sat for his Kenya African Primary Education (KAPE) in 1961.

His ecclesiastical life times began in 1964 when he was confirmed the evangelist of the then Kiandangae parish, which was then under Rev Richard Mbui as the priest in-charge. Subsequently, he joined McGregor theological college, Weithaga, from July 1969 to June 1971. He was made an Anglican Deacon in July 1971 by Bishop Obadiah Kariuki; and made a full Priest in December 1975 by the 'new' Bishop David Gitari of the then Mount Kenya East.

As a student of McGregor theological college, Weithaga, Karani recalled his three teachers as Rev John Mahia-ini (later Bishop of Mount Kenya Central) as principal, and Rev Allan Page, and Dr Collins as tutors. Upon his successful completion of studies, Karani served in a number of parishes of central Kenya. that is, Karungu parish, Embu, July 1971 to December 1972; Limuru parish – Kiambu County, 1973 to 1975; Kagari Parish, Embu, 1976 to June 1978; Kanyuambora parish, Mbeere, July 1978 to December 1979; Karaba Parish, Mbeere, January 1980 to December 1980; Mutira parish of Kirinyaga County, January 1981 to December 1981; Mutithi parish of Kirinyaga, January 1982 to December 1984; Marimanti, Meru County, January 1985 to December 1988; Ndiriti parish of Kirinyaga, 1989 to 1992; Gacaru parish of Kirinyaga, January 1993 to December 1995; Getuya parish of Kirinyaga, January 1996 to December 1999; Karima parish January 2000 to July 2001; Kiangwenyi parish, July 2001 to December 2006. He retired on 17th December 2006 while at Kiangwenyi – in a colourful ceremony which was presided over by Bishop Daniel Munene Ngoru of Kirinyaga.

Following his retirement in 2006, Rev Karani reverted to maize farming. He however regrets that the Anglican Church ministry is highly diluted by the emerging Pentecostal waves. In his view, early ministry was more appealing and acceptable, "we need to revert to real Anglicanism, [for the] current Anglicanism is too loose, too diluted. Youth is taking things too lightly hence watering down Anglicanism." He blames Pentecostalism for its influence in the mainline churches such as Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian

churches. He further regrets that the youthful clergy are not strong enough to withstand the new waves; hence they are equally swayed. The end result, he argues, the youths are sometimes getting 'misled.' He recalls the earlier days when clergy were firm and more respectable. Sadly, to him, the ministry is weak as Anglicanism is no longer upheld even by the youthful clergy. This drives us to wonder: when is the Anglicanism strong? Is it when it is blended with other 'ingredients' such as African culture and American Pentecostalism? Does the beauty of Anglicanism remain when we retain the old forms of worship and general practice? Where is the place of globalization in the Anglican Church worship and practice? Has the Anglican Church in Kenya and Africa lived up to expectations in the 21st century? Where is the place of the youth in the new dispensation? Karani's concerns are however credible and worth paying attention to.

CHAPTER FOUR

Most Rev. Dr. David Mukuba Gitari

Introduction

Though not a member of Mutira pastorate, Dr. David Mukuba Gitari contributed immensely in the history of the latter; hence little can be said without mentioning his immense contribution. He reigned as the local bishop since 1975 and is still active todate (2011), especially with regard to programmes that are geared towards empowering the youth in Kirinyaga County. To this end, it is near impossible to write the history of Mutira mission without mentioning him.

Birth and Naming

In tracing his background, the retired Anglican Archbishop, David Mukuba Gitari was born on 16 September 1937. In strict phonetic spelling, his names should be written as David Getare Mukuva. Obviously, African names have intended meanings. In Gitari's case, his second name, Mukuva, is a Kamba name that may mean a sewing needle while among the Kikuyu of Kirinyaga, it is written as Mukuba, but with the same meaning. Interestingly, the name Gitari may mean a doctor, a nurse (*dagitari*), or even a *mutari*. That is, a prophet-like character who advises or counsels people in time of need. David is the baptism name that Gitari received from the Church during his baptism, and is taken from the biblical King David, the son of Jesse (see Ruth 4:17-22; 1 Samuel 16; 1Chronicles 2: 12-17).

From the above interpretation, Gitari, as a noun, means one who is an extraordinary person. Considering the deep religiosity of the African people¹ and in bearing in mind that Gitari's two African names, *Gitari wa Mukuva* (Gitari son of Mukuva), which may be interpreted to mean, 'the sewing needle that counsels or prophesies to the Nation,' or 'a sewing needle that sews the Nation together,' one wonders whether these names signaled prophetic insights into his future role as one of Kenya and Africa's great prophetic Bishops who courageously called for sanity when the Nation had lost its conscience? Could he have been seeing something that others were not able to fully comprehend? Were his words of counsel, sometimes stinging remarks, meant to stitch up a torn up Nation? Does it mean that Kenya needed to have always listened and heeded his prophetic sermons and speeches?

Gitari's Early Life

Gitari's parents are Evangelist Samuel Mukuba and Jessie Njuku from Ngirambu in the neighbouring Kabare pastorate. In regard to his earlier days, he joined the prestigious Kangaru High School from 1955 to 1958 and proceeded to Nairobi University in 1959 where he graduated in 1964 with a Bachelor of Arts (B.A. Honours). In his youthful days, he was greatly involved in Missions to schools and Universities throughout Africa. He studied Theology at Bristol from 1968 to 1971 as an external student of the University of London and graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity (B.D). From 1972 to 1975, he served as the General Secretary of the Bible Society of Kenya and Chairman of Kenya Students Christian Fellowship (KSCF). In 1983, he was awarded an honorary (*honoris causa*) Doctor of Divinity (D.D) by Ashley Seminary, Ohio, USA.

In regard to his Episcopal duties, he was Bishop of the Diocese of Mt. Kenya East from 1975 to 1990. When the latter was subdivided to form Embu and Kirinyaga Dioceses, he became the

¹See John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: EAEP, 1969), 1- 2).

first Bishop of Kirinyaga. During his ministry as a Bishop, he powerfully and fearlessly used the pulpit to prophesy to the Nation thus helping to change the course of political affairs in both Kirinyaga District and the entire republic of Kenya. At times, he paid dearly with his life when politically connected thugs were sent in 1989 to eliminate him for his stand against some policies of the intolerant government of the day but escaped unhurt when climbed up the first floor of his house as he distressfully shouted for help. Luckily, his good neighbours came and immediately thwarted the killing bid.

Gitari's Ancestry

Gitari's father, Evangelist Samuel Mukuva, was a Mukamba by ethnic group. He was born in Kitui District, Mutonguini location in about 1882. But owing to the great famine that ravaged the District in 1899, Mukuva went to Kikuyuland, Ngirambu in Kirinyaga District, with his mother Muta. As fate would have it, Muta and his son Mukuva were adopted by the family of Gituku and became members of Ugaciku clan. As Mukuva grew up, he travelled to the Coastal City of Mombasa to look for job, in 1914; and while there, Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries led him to faith in Jesus Christ. In 1919, he returned to Ngirambu to share the Good News with the people of this village; and in so doing, he became the first missionary to ever preach the Gospel in the locality. Subsequently, the present day Church, St. Matthew's Ngirambu, was built by the locals in memory of Samuel Mukuva, the pioneer missionary, evangelist, and teacher.

At the mission station where Samuel Mukuva taught literacy and the Gospel of Jesus, he met Jessie Njuku who was one of his pupils. After falling in love with Njuku their Holy matrimony was sermonized by Rev. Ramphley at St. Andrews, Kabare Church, about ten miles West of Ngirambu, on 24th October 1924. Samuel and Jessie's marriage in as early as 1924 has several lessons for the post December 27, 2007 elections, which was fought on tribal lines. First, marriage need not be based on clannism, ethnicity or race. Rather, since all are children of God, Kenyans need to just appreciate cultural

diversity as a plus rather than a minus to their co-existence. In view of this, reports that some intermarriages among the Kikuyus and the Kalenjins are negatively affected when villagers set on one another after the disputed elections alongside ethnic considerations shows that Samuel (a Kamba) and Jessie (a Kikuyu) have lessons for us in post December 27, 2007 Kenya. Second, ethnic co-existence has been there in Kenya since time immemorial. For when hunger struck a community, a person could migrate to another one and be a blessing to the new community. Third, making a son of a Mukamba to be a Bishop in a predominantly Kikuyu dominated Diocese is in itself a lesson for the post December 27 Kenya. Why? It shows that any good leader should emerge out of meritocracy but not out of ethnic or other prejudicial considerations. It is for this reason that Gitari played his role with confidence and dedication, knowing that he was there by merit. Kenya has to learn from this experience.

Reportedly, Jessie and Samuel's marriage was the first Holy Matrimony to be celebrated in Kabare Parish, which was nearly half of the present day Kirinyaga County. They were later blessed with eight children. That is, Hannah (1925), Harun Njagi (1930), Peninah (1932), Stanley Nzuki (1935), David Gitari (1937), Mary (1940), Eliud Njiru (1943), and Freda (1948). In my interviews with Rev. Marclus Njiru (on 3rd March 2008), Gitari's Nephew, in the early stages of Gitari's lifetimes, people in the family circle did not think he would make it in later life, especially due to his 'conservatism' as a committed Christian. This view was however proved wrong as God works with even the most unlikely people.

Samuel passed on, on 3rd October 1970; while Jessie passed on, on 2nd January 2000. Jessie Njuku who had a rare opportunity of seeing three centuries, by virtue of the fact that she was born in 1898 remained a widow for nearly 30 years. Like her husband, she also became an adult educator in the 1930s and 1940s. In addition, she doubled as a traditional midwife. Indeed, even the Kenyan government recognized her by honouring her as a traditional midwife. In an interview, Gitari says: "I can remember her being waken up at the wee hours of the night to go and help women to deliver."

In his early upbringing Gitari was taught by his parents not to fear superstitious beliefs, which had filled the community. In turn, Jessie and Samuel Mukuva rescued children who were thrown away either because they were twins or they grew the upper teeth first. As Gitari, noted in our interview, his father would ring the Church Gong (bell) to call people for worship at 6:00 A.M every morning, and 6:00 PM every evening. This sound of the Gong was believed to have driven the Demons of Karumba valley away. And in turn, the locality would experience of awe. Gitari grew in such an environment, an environment that helps us to see some of his formative factors. For with highly informed parents, in those days, Gitari was bound to go beyond his parents in religious world.

Gitari's Marriage, Ordination, and Schooling

Gitari attended the prestigious Kangaru High School in Embu District of Eastern Kenya before attending the University of Nairobi for a Bachelor of Arts degree (Honours), in 1959. He married Grace Wanjiru on 31 March 1966 and God blessed them with three sons, Sammy, Jonathan, and Mwendwa.² In his youthful days, he was greatly involved in preaching ministry in schools and universities all over Africa. From 1968 to 1971, he studied Theology at Bristol as an external student of the University of London and graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity (BD). From 1972 to 1975, he served as the General Secretary of the Bible Society of Kenya, and Chairman of Kenya Students Christian Fellowship (KSCF).³

Gitari was ordained into the priesthood of the Anglican Church in 1972 by Bishop Obadiah Kariuki. On July 20, 1975, at the age of thirty-seven, Gitari was consecrated and enthroned as the first bishop

²See Alfred Sheunda Keyas, "Gitari, Mukuba David, b. 1937, Anglican Church Kenya," http://www.dacb.org/stories/kenya/gitari_david.html

³See Alfred Sheunda Keyas, "Gitari, Mukuba David, b. 1937, Anglican Church Kenya," http://www.dacb.org/stories/kenya/gitari_david.html

of Mt. Kenya East diocese, which was basically half of Kenya. In that position, Gitari founded St. Andrews College of Theology and Development at Kabare. Since then, St. Andrews has become a University Campus of St. Paul's University, Limuru. Gitari served as the Bishop of Mount Kenya East, as bishop, until 1990 when Mt. Kenya East diocese was split into Embu and Kirinyaga dioceses. He then moved to Kirinyaga, thereby becoming the first bishop of Kirinyaga.

In both his tenure as the bishop of Mount Kenya East (1975-90) and of Kirinyaga (1990-96) there was phenomenal church growth in these two dioceses. As evangelism was his first priority, he led many missions in African universities. These initiatives were creatively combined with development, theological education, liturgical renewal, and the encouragement of women's ordination. He served for many years as chairman of the provincial board of theological education in the Anglican Church of Kenya. He served four times as chair of the National Council of Churches of Kenya and acted as a mediator between the international evangelical and ecumenical movements. He also served as chairman of the board of St. Paul's United Theological College, Limuru. He was a member of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission from 1983-1990.⁴

Gitari and Ecumenical Bodies

Dr. Gitari has travelled widely and his ecumenical involvement has put him on several committees, local, national and international. In particular, he has served as:-

- (i) A member of the strategy committee of the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation.

⁴See Alfred Sheunda Keyas, "Gitari, Mukuba David, b. 1937, Anglican Church Kenya," http://www.dacb.org/stories/kenya/gitari_david.html

- (ii) Chairman of the World Evangelical Fellowship Theological Commission.
- (iii) A Vice President of the World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism; and member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)
- (iv) A member of the International Anglican Liturgical Commission.
- (v) A chairman of the African Theological Fellowship.
- (vi) A chairman of C.A.A.P. Liturgical Commission
- (vii) A member of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians (INFEMIT)
- (viii) A chairman of the London based Christians relating to Muslims project
- (ix) A chairman of the Provincial Board of Theological Education and Liturgy
- (x) A member of the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974.

Some of Gitari's Achievements as a Bishop

In a nutshell, some of his achievements as a bishop of Kirinyaga (later Archbishop of Kenya) are:

- (i) Saving Kamuruana Hill, a public land, from being grabbed by companies calling themselves JIMKA and JAKEN;
- (ii) Coming out very strongly against the queuing system of voting in Kenya (*Mlolongo*) in place of secret ballot;
- (iii) Condemning the assassination of the populist Nyandarwa North Member of Parliament, Josiah Mwangi Kariuki, in 1975;
- (iv) The formation of Kenya Anglican Men Association (KAMA) is one of the greatest achievements as the Archbishop (2002-2007);
- (v) Installation of internet including Local Area Network (LAN) in Provincial office, and in the entire Anglican Church of Kenya;
- (vi) Training of computer users in various Anglican Dioceses of Kenya Diocese and Institutions.

Some of Gitari's Achievements as an Archbishop

During his tenure as the Anglican Archbishop of Kenya, Gitari revived training institutions, especially the Anglican Theological Education by Extension (TEE) program, which was floundering in many dioceses; and with the help of grants from Trinity Church, New York, he helped set up the Anglican website so that all dioceses could have access to Internet service. This ultimately made communication and networking easier. With such achievements, it is no wonder that in his enthronement speech on September 22, 2002, Benjamin Nzimbi, fourth Kenyan African archbishop and bishop of All Saints diocese, paid tribute to his predecessor, Dr. David Gitari, for his bold leadership, vowing to follow in his footsteps. Archbishop Nzimbi also quoted a Kiswahili poem praising Dr. Gitari: "*Gitari ni hodari. Gitari ni daktari. Gitari ni jemedari. Gitari ni hatari.*" (Gitari is bold. Gitari is a doctor. Gitari is an army commander. Gitari is tough).⁵

Gitari after Retirement

Following the regime change in December 2002, the new President, Mwai Kibaki, in 2003, gave him one of the highest State Honours, the Moran of the Burning Spear (MBS), for his dedicated services to the republic of Kenya.⁶ This honour confirms that Gitari's prophetic role has been appreciated across the board. During the 2010 Kenyan referendum, the retired Archbishop almost stood single-handedly in support of the proposed constitution while the rest of the church leaders opposed it. In this case, he would assemble people from all walks of life to his Philadelphia place (home) where he would encourage them to see the benefits of the new proposed law. He would urge them to focus on the advantages such as increased civil

⁵See Alfred Sheunda Keyas, "Gitari, Mukuba David, b. 1937, Anglican Church Kenya," http://www.dacb.org/stories/kenya/gitari_david.html

⁶See David M. Gitari, *Responsible Church Leadership* (Nairobi: Acton, 2005).

liberties, and widening of democratic space among others. Eventually, Gitari won when 67% of Kenyans endorsed the new law. Another important milestone for Gitari is in March 2011 when his side won after a contested debate on where should Kirinyaga County, his ancestral administrative area, is located. While some favoured Kerugoya Town, Gitari and his team favoured Kutus Town. After a vote by delegates from the five Districts that constitute Kirinyaga County at Sagana Country Lodge, Gitari's team won with over 80%. In other words, Gitari's retirement did not confine him to socio-ecclesiastical oblivion. Rather, it made him more accessible to people especially in his local Kirinyaga County. He is also a constant guest of Thika Anglican Diocese and All Saints Cathedral Diocese – where he is constantly invited to preach. As a matter of fact, his Philadelphia Hotel and Retreat Centre, near Embu Town, became a centre for civic education – where he mainly focussed on the youth – teaching them to be responsible leaders and citizens.

Gitari's Working Methodologies

As a Bishop of Kirinyaga, Gitari's working methodologies are greatly remembered. As a matter of fact, a number of Kirinyaga Anglican clergy have constantly attempted to imitate some of his creative and dynamic working gimmicks. Some of them included the *use of slogans and repetitive phrases*. For him to drive his point home, he had a unique way of keeping the crowd together. For example, whenever he made a "sensitive" comment(s), he would ask the crowd, *Muguki - igua? Mukuiguai?* (Literally, "Did you hear? Did you see?" Meaning, "Have you heard and seen?" Or "Are you travelling with me?"). And the ever-enthusiastic audience would automatically note the seriousness of the matter under discussion and respond in unison: *Tuguki-iguai, Tuguki-onai* (literally, we have heard, we have seen). When both the Pentecostal wave threatened Gitari's domain by working hard to fish from Gitari's pond, on one hand, and the suspected Government agents, on the other hand, were releasing leaflets to discredit him and the Church in general, he responded by coining a sloganeering song that was sung thus:

<i>Ona ni kure mbura</i>	————	Even if it rains
<i>Ona ya kiboboto</i>	————	Even if it is heavy flooding
<i>Kana ya micumari</i>	————	Even if it rains Nails
<i>Kanitha ndikoima</i>	————	I will never abandon the Church
 <i>Kanitha nii ndikoimai</i>	 ————	 I vow never to ever abandon my church
<i>anitha ndikoma</i>	————	I will stick to my church
 <i>Ona ni kure mbura</i>	 ————	 Even if it rains
<i>Ona ya kiboboto</i>	————	Even if it is heavy flooding
<i>Kana ya micumari</i>	————	Even if it rains Nails
<i>Kanitha ndikoima</i>	————	I will never abandon the Church

By the word Church, Gitari, though an Ecumenist, was referring to his own Anglican Church of Kenya, Kirinyaga Diocese (1986-1991). Raining Nails referred to the State persecutions that the Church was undergoing as a result of his uncompromising stand that he had taken on matters of social justice in the local and the national levels. Like John in his book of Revelation (1-4), Gitari was simply telling his audience, *Vumilia mateso ya sasa. Ni ya muda tu! Tuzo la baadaye ni kubwa*. That is, “Persevere the persecution that you are encountering now. It is only for a while. You will be crowned with abounding victory later. So stand firm.” By Gitari cautioning his audience not to abandon the Church, he was telling his local Kirinyaga Diocese first and the Nation as a whole later that they should not allow themselves to be carried away by emerging waves. Be they religious or political. So whether Pentecostal Churches are making big waves with their ‘new gospel’ that should not make Christians loose their focus. And since some were supporting the repressive regime and arguing that Gitari was doing politics rather than ‘preaching the Word of God’, it made them increase in membership – as some were convinced that there could never be any juxtaposition between Church and Politics. In his retirement (since 2002), Gitari has watched some leaders of these Pentecostal Churches declaring

their intensions to view for elective posts in the governance of the Nation – some years after some had opposed his crusade for a *laissez faire* society for all. Hence the African proverb that says, “He who tills the land is not necessarily the one who eats the produce of the farm.”

An illustration on this: In the December 2007 elections Bishop Pius Muiru of the huge Pentecostal Church, Maximum Miracle Centre, declared and eventually contested the post of the Presidency to replace the incumbent President Mwai Kibaki. He first began by saying that he was contesting under the Kenya Peoples Party. Similarly, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, of another Pentecostal leaning Church, *Jesus Is Alive Ministries*, declared and finally contested the populous Nairobi’s Starehe Constituency, which was previously represented by Hon. Maina Kamanda, the then Minister for Sport, culture, Gender and Social Services. Of great interest was that while Hon Kamanda was in the government leaning Party of National Unity (PNU), Bishop Margaret Wanjiru was in the anti-government opposition party, Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). While Bishop Muiru lost both the parliamentary and the Presidency, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru won the Starehe Constituency Seat and was eventually named Assistant Minister for Housing in the Coalition government that was formed by PNU and ODM after the disputed December 27, 2007 elections. In this post election Coalition, Raila Odinga of ODM was named Prime Minister while Mwai Kibaki of PNU became the President. In the Moi era (1978-2002) Pentecostal churches in Kenya were seen as supportive of the government - as “all governments are ordained by God” (Romans 13). They only participated in politics when ‘praying’ for the government. Indeed, there were some reports that some leaders from the Pentecostal Churches were being hosted by the government functionaries, given cars and other favours for their ‘prayers.’ Since 2002 when the National Rainbow Coalition defeated the erstwhile governing party, KANU, which was in power from 1963 to 2002, this trend, has now changed.

Gitari also employed **story-telling** as a method in his Church ministry in Kirinyaga (1986-1991). In this, he would tell stories of personified animals and the audience would understand the implication and the moral of the story. At other times, he would tell stories of natural objects e.g. the competition between the Sun and the Wind. As a matter of fact, story-telling as an art is one major form of communication in our African indigenous society. Although it was traditionally told around a fire camp, Gitari would tell stories, which were always relevant and compatible with his chosen biblical text, in the pulpit and in all forums where he was called upon to make a speech. In these stories, Gitari would thus use figurative and symbolic language.

Another methodology which Gitari employed in his prophetic ministry was **the use of ancestral resources** to communicate his message of liberation and reconstruction of our society, which was in dire need of religio-social reform. By use of ancestral resources, I mean, Gitari would encourage Christian message being communicated through folk dances but with some revisions so that the contents would address the worship of God of Christendom as opposed to the God of African Traditional Religion. To demonstrate this, Gitari saw to the production of a Christian hymnbook, *Nyimbo Cia Gucanjamura Ngoro* (literally meaning, ‘songs to warm the heart’), with ancestral melodies that clearly reflected the local context. In so doing, he led the Christians in owning the Gospel as their word that was delivered to them through from time immemorial when their ancestors used to sing happily.

Overall, Gitari’s methodology in his ecclesiastical duties was **an all-inclusive approach**. This means that he did not only recognise the ecumenical movement in Africa (read NCKK, AACC etc) as a vital institution whose existence is not only indispensable due to the problems created by denominationalism,⁷ but more importantly, he worked with non-Christians and the emerging opposition politicians.

⁷Samuel Kobia, “The next fifty Years” in Margaret Crouch (ed), *A Vision of Christian Mission* (Nairobi: NCKK, 1993), 232.

Gitari would also invite the so-called political dissidents, most of who got into the government when KANU finally lost in the 2002 general elections. They include the then fiery Hon. Paul Muite (an Anglican Christian), Hon. Waruru Kanja (a Muslim and a fiery oppositionist politician), Hon. Professor Wangari Maathai (who became the first African Woman Nobel Laureate in 2004), and Hon. James Orengo, a prominent lawyer and a fiery politician, among others. One day, in early 1991, he invited everyone who was interested to pray for a return to Multi-party political system to assemble at St. Thomas Kerugoya Anglican Cathedral to come for prayers. As I observed, the “prayer session” included who is who in the opposition politics of the time! I remember in 1987 when, as my bishop, he invited Hon. Nahashon Njuno, the then Kirinyaga East MP, now Gichugu constituency, to speak to a congregation in my local Emmanuel Church, Mutira, to greet the congregation even when the Government through the local KANU Branch had barred him from speaking in public. By “breaking the law,” Gitari was trying to tell the Kenyan authorities that “no one has a right to deny you the right to freedom of speech and association.” Secondly, Gitari was trying to guard against any form of societal fragmentation – as being one is far much better than being divided when we have a common course.

Relevance and Critique of Gitari-ism

In this book, Gitari-ism refers to the boldness in Church leadership that the retired Archbishop David Mukuba Gitari displayed in his prophetic ministry, especially in the period from 1986 to 2002. It also refers to his legacy as a public figure. Certainly, Gitari-ism is a living spirit that continues to inform ecclesiastical duties in Kirinyaga, Kenya and beyond.

By inviting everyone regardless of race, creed, religion, gender, faith, colour to work with him during those turbulent days, Gitari risked making Christianity to look like mission without borders. In other words, was it Church ministry that he was doing? Or was it a matter of inviting both Jews and Gentiles to build the wall (cf. Nehemiah 2)? By the heavy attendance of oppositionist politicians

in his “political ministry” (1986-91), wasn’t that implying that the gospel is with the oppositionists while the government was not? And wouldn’t that have given the wrong impression that Gitari was taking sides between two warring factions rather than reconciling them – as a bishop? Nevertheless, by his all-inclusive approach, Gitari had the last laugh, in 1991, when the high-handed KANU yielded to the demands of the vast majority of Kenyans who had Gitari and a few church leaders to speak for them – as the real voice of the people.

Thus, the “all-inclusive” approach in Gitari’s ministry can attract mixed reactions from various practitioners of Christian faith. For if the Christian ministry is undertaken without caution one may wonder: are we going to include even “Satan” in our theo-social schema? What is our moral-ethical consideration in “including everyone”? Are we going to include tares even when we know it is not wheat?

At this juncture, it is critical to appreciate that Gitari’s prophetic ministry is not in isolation, as history is replete with stories of Church leaders’ involvement on matters to do with the governance of their respective countries. In Nicaragua, In Nicaragua, pressure from the Catholic Church led to the collapse of the Sandinista regime. The church was so strong that Cardinal Miguel Obando Bravo, Archbishop of Managua, was named a signatory to several peace accords during the 1990 transition. He also influenced the new education system that replaced the Sandinistas. The Catholics also kept the new regime under surveillance. Several times, church leaders complained that the new government tolerated corruption and usurped the cause of justice.

In the Philippines, the Catholic Church hastened the departure of Dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1987. Interestingly, it is two of Marcos’ generals who requested Cardinal Jaime Sin to help topple their iron-fisted ruler, forever changing the dictatorship’s status as one of the most powerful men. Amidst rising opposition both from within and outside the government, the national assembly ruled that Marcos had won the 1986 elections. Two of his top generals led a plan to oppose the government. The very night they learned that the

government's security services were after them, they called Cardinal Sin, who immediately asked all parishes to support the rebel soldiers. Counting on US support, Marcos staged his own installation ceremony as President. But he got it wrong. The message to the Catholics had sunk in and the protest had become mighty and defiant. He had to leave the country, and yet another repressive regime succumbed to a faith-inspired movement. But Cardinal Sin would not take credit for the regime's collapse. He said simply: "The people cried, and their voice was heard in high heaven."⁸ A similar case happened in January 2001 when a popular uprising removed President Joseph Estrada allegedly for being corrupt. Like in the previous case, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Jaime Sin, organized the protests, as was the case in 1986.

To this end, it is critical to appreciate that due to Gitari's consistency in confronting social justices facing the Nation, he left a spirit among the Kenyan churches, which can be referred to as Gitari-ism. In turn, Gitari-ism is a prophetic ministry where all sins of commission or omission are confronted by church leadership irrespective of who or which Party is ruling the country. However, this was a phenomenon which was conspicuously missing during the post Moi era (2002-). Sadly, after Gitari's retirement, in 2002, the once vocal church became silent, thereby leaving a huge gaping hole as the likes of the fiery erstwhile Secretary General of the National Council of Churches of Kenya, now a Member of Parliament of Gachoka constituency on a ruling party ticket, Party of National Unity, Rev. Hon. Mutava Musyimi, when they went "secular" by becoming all manner of administrators and state functionaries. Indeed, the Church was now seen as supporting the Government of President Mwai Kibaki in total disregard of Gitari-ism. But following the unprecedented post December 27, 2007 Election violence, which claimed over 1, 000 lives and left almost 400, 000 as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in a country that has hitherto remained an island of peace, in a region that is characterised by chaos, various

⁸Julius Gathogo, *The Truth About African Hospitality*: 95.

questions have cropped up: First, if the Church maintained its prophetic voice, as Gitari, Okullu and Muge, among others, had set as a precedence, wouldn't they have spared the tension that visited the country after the disputed December 2007 elections? Was Gitari's message unheeded by his succeeding Church leaders and the nation at large? Is there anything that he could have failed to do during his time? Or were they expecting the old man to wake up from retirement and market his 'project'? Or were they waiting for directions from a certain church leader, somewhere?

Nevertheless, following the belated admission by the once vocal Kenyan Church leaders (through the umbrella National Council of Churches of Kenya) that "we erred as we did not speak with one voice" and "we did, in fact, took sides on the basis of ethnicity," on 14th February 2008, it is critical to appreciate that Gitari-ism cannot be wished away in Kenya. As a matter of fact, Gitari, in his heyday, would always advice his fellow Church leaders not to "go very close or very far from the government of the day" – as this was 'the sure' way of serving the society. In his view, when Church leaders 'get very close' to the government, their prophetic voice weaken, hence they loose their moral authority to challenge injustices in the society, especially where the government would be an accomplice. The claims by the Orange Democratic Movement that the government rigged the elections in favour of the incumbent president is such an example, as the post-Gitari Church found itself unable to speak either for or against the government. In view of this, Gitari's form of Kenyan liberation theology could easily be remembered, especially after the post December 27, 2007 election crisis. Thus, the failure by the Kenyan Church to uphold Gitari-ism, by being vocal on matters where politicians misled the nation culminating to the mass displacements after elections nearly brought it to near irrelevancy. One can imagine if Gitari were still serving as an Archbishop, as he would have continued with his stinging ministry, which always called the nation back to its conscience. Gitari-ism is thus relevant in the post December 2007 Kenya.

Conclusion

The Church in Kenya and Africa at large must thus learn to allow religion to play its prophetic role, as this is one way of avoiding malpractices and extremes such as genocide, which took a million people in Rwanda in 1994. And as President Paul Kagame of Rwanda cautioned, genocide does not start with a million deaths.⁹ It starts with five, then ten, then fifty, shortly it grows to hundred, then it goes to thousands. By the time you realize what is happening, it has gained a momentum that is wiping out life in villages and communities and is getting out of control. Indeed, this drives us to realize the relevance of Gitari-ism in post-Moi Kenya, as he would not have watched as the Nation goes tribal.

On the whole, the chapter has demonstrated that Gitari's pedigree is relevant to the modern Kenya for several reasons. First, Gitari is a product of interethnic marriage that worked very well. It produced a large family some of whom became a big asset to the locality and the nation at large. Second, it also shows the post December 2007 Kenya that violence which is engineered by ethnicity can be overcome. For in adopting Mutaa and her son Mukuva in the family of Gituku, and subsequently becoming a member of the local clan, this shows that Kenyans can go beyond this. Consequently, Gitari grew as a Kenyan first rather than being a Mukamba or a Kikuyu. In turn, it helped him to appreciate himself as a citizen of the world. Third, a silent church is not at tandem with the modernity. If the post Moi and post Gitari church was vocal enough, may be the country would not be the way it is today. Fourth, Gitari's pedigree is useful for the Nation as it concurs with the old adage that says that 'if one wants to make a great nation she or he has to focus on families first.' Jessie and Samuel played their role exceedingly well and as such, they introduced Gitari to the God of Christendom, cautioned him not to fear superstitious beliefs or the demons of Karumba valley

⁹Paul Kagame quoted by Koigi wa Wamwere, "Only Kenyans Can Halt their own Destruction," Daily Nation, www.nationmedia.com, page 11, February 14, 2008.

among other things. In this, Gitari was inspired to exorcise the demons of Kenyan politics, which he did not fear even when he was threatened with dire consequences. If we strive to make good families, the nation can have honest and courageous men and women who would always strive to work for the kingdom of God without fear or favour. As we surge on with the new challenges of the twenty-first century, we need to reflect on Gitari's ministry – as one way of understanding the reality of Christian leadership in Africa today. Indeed, Kenya needs a sewing needle that counsels or prophesies to the Nation, and Gitari-ism is the spirit that will do.

CHAPTER FIVE

Some Post Independence Clergy with Mutira Roots

Introduction

Other than the first five African clergy with mutira roots, there are post independent clergy who have made a distinctive mark, hence doing Mutira proud. These are clergymen who got ordained in the 1970s, and were relatively young when Kenya attained her constitutional independence from the British government, in 1963. Thus, even though they were born before 1963, they had not begun Anglican ministries, especially at the priestly levels. They are post independent heroes because they excelled and in fact, went beyond expectations.

Bishop Daniel Munene Ngoru (1947 -)

Daniel Munene Ngoru was consecrated as the Bishop of Kirinyaga in 1997. Before his consecration, he had contested with five other candidates during the bishopric elections held at St. Thomas Cathedral, Kerugoya. They included: Rev. Canon Dr. Moses M. Njoroge and Rev. Jephthah Kiara Gathaka who came second and third respectively. Interestingly, after Canon Daniel Munene, as he was popularly called, was elevated to the highest seat in the diocese, Bishop, he did not harbour grudges with his erstwhile competitors; rather, he teamed up with them to rebuild the Diocese which he had inherited from Dr. David Gitari, and who in turn had been elected as third African Archbishop of Kenya. In view of this, he appointed

Canon Moses M. Njoroge as the Vicar General, one may say – his number two – a post he has held since 1997 – 2012. He also displayed high respect to Rev. Gathaka – for whenever they met at various functions, he would request him to either greet the congregation, or conduct a prayer among other undertakings – thereby setting a good example to modern Africa, where the victor and the vanquished must forge ahead for the common good of all.

Born in 1947 at Thigirici village in Kiine Location, Ndia Division in the present day Kirinyaga County, Munene was born as the eldest son of Ngoru Mbui-Imwe and Salome Wambui. His other siblings include: Joyce, Eunice and Grace. He spent his early childhood grazing his fathers' herds in Mwea, where they had shifted to from Kiine – after their father returned from his early retirement in hotel management in the coastal city of Kenya, Mombasa. It was not until he was ten years old, 1957, that he joined Sagana Primary School – after 'successfully' completing his first career of 'traditional animal husbandry and grazing.' In effect, his first career was indeed a prophetic signal that pointed to the trajectory that his life times would take – chief shepherd of the people (read bishop).

From Anglican Church Sagana Primary School, Munene joined Rukanga Primary School in 1960. Afterwards, he joined Mutithi Intermediate School (1961 to 1963). This was before he left for Uganda to study at St. Nicholas Kasubi for his secondary school education. It is here that he sat for his Cambridge examinations in 1967. On completing secondary school education, he returned to Kenya and joined Meru Teachers' College in 1968; after which he taught for eight years at Mutithi, Kagio and Thanju Primary Schools. Apart from normal school teaching, he was among the first group of teachers who agreed to teach adult education classes during their spare time; and had a successful class in Mutithi Primary School. With regard to community development, Munene took special interests on societal concerns, especially in his home area, Rukanga, where he organised Githogondo self help project as the group secretary. It comprised of about 300 members. From 1968 onwards, the group undertook various self help projects.

It is in 1977 that he claims to have felt called to serve in the church as a full time priest; and subsequently resigned his teaching post to join St. Andrews' College of Theology and Development, Kabare. After graduating from St. Andrews' Kabare in 1979, Munene was made an Anglican Deacon by the then Bishop (David Gitari) of Mount Kenya East. Having earned the title of a Reverend, Munene was posted in Kigari, and later Ngiriambu parishes. He was ordained priest in 1980 at Nembure after which he was sent as a Curate at Sagana Parish in 1981. He also served as Vicar in Kiriani (1982-83) and Kamuruana parish (1984-85). He joined St. Paul's University, Limuru, in 1985 and graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity Degree in 1988. Prior to joining St. Andrews' Kabare, in 1979, Munene was a member of Gacharu parish council and the treasurer of Gitaraga Anglican church.

Upon his posting at St. Andrews' College, Kabare, he doubled as a Lecturer and the Director of Academics in 1988. He doubled as the Rural Dean of Mutira Deanery and Vicar of Mutira parish in 1989; and served as the Archdeacon of Kabare, by then comprising of Kabare, Mwea and Karaba, in the then Mt. Kenya East Diocese, in 1990. In 1991, he returned to St. Andrews' College, Kabare, as a lecturer and the Director of Lay Training plus the College Chaplain. Clearly, his earlier days as a herd's boy prepared him for such demanding tasks.

During the fall-out on Women ordination in the newly created Diocese of Kirinyaga, following the sub-division of Mt. Kenya East that brought about Kirinyaga and Embu dioceses, in 1991, Ven. Titus Ngotho Njuno, the then critic of women ordination, was demoted from the prestigious post of being the Provost of St. Thomas Cathedral – after which Munene was posted there. He was to serve for a short period, as a Provost, for he had to travel to Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS), England, for post graduate studies. He returned to Kenya to conduct researches in 1995 and was made the Diocesan Administrative Secretary until 1996 when he returned to Britain for his ongoing studies. He again returned to Kenya in August 1997 and joined St. Andrews' Kabare as a tutor. After a

brief stint as a lecturer, he was elected as the bishop of Kirinyaga Anglican Diocese on 26th September 1997.

With regard to his marital life, Munene married Agness Njoki Kibuchi from Kibirigwi in 1975, and since then, they are settled at their ancestral farm, Githua-ini. He assumed the headship of their big and extended family when his father Ngoru died in 1996. He converted to Christianity in 1956 after listening to the East African Revival Movement (popularly called *Balokole* group); and was baptized in 1958 at Kiandangae; and confirmed in 1960 at Thiba. Since his conversion, Munene became an active *Balokole* who energetically organised crusades, revival meetings and was ardent in home-to-home evangelism.

As a widely travelled person, Munene was in the Kenyan delegation that represented the church to the historical Earth Summit on Environment (loosely called Ozone Summit), in 1991. It was held in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. He was also among the first group to be made Canons at St. Thomas Cathedral in Kirinyaga Diocese, in 1991. Apart from UK and Brazil, Munene has travelled to Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Germany, Netherlands, South Africa, South America and Ethiopia among others. In his private life, Munene likes music, drama, fishing, swimming and photography. He is also a keen environmentalist and an archivist. As he prepares to retire as a bishop in 2012, following the mandatory age of 65, Munene will have left a cohesive diocese with educated clergy – considering that his education policy for clergy was an open one. That is, “if one wants to study, let him or her look for funds, go for further studies and return to the office for posting.” This is a rare opportunity given to clergy under Munene’s stewardship, as most dioceses of Kenya tend to control the number of highly educated labour force, as salary increments, which accompany successful completion of studies, is normally a challenge. To avoid such challenges, most church heads would want to control the number of those who go for further studies, particularly at post graduate levels. Munene’s hands-off approach therefore has paid dividends which might be felt after he retires. Interestingly, there are those who have constantly accused him of failing to actively

involve the retired Archbishop David Gitari, his mentor, in his schemes of work. But this can only be addressed effectively after surveying the various backgrounds surrounding this. Certainly, Gitari remained busy after and before his retirement; and probably needed not be strained with lots of work. In particular, he runs Philadelphia Retreat Centre near Embu Town. He teaches civic education. He also participated actively in the famous July 2010 Kenyan referendum which ushered in a new constitution in the governance of the Country. Did Bishop Munene have to overburden Archbishop Gitari after retirement? By no means, no! Nonetheless, Gitari's outstanding legacy remains a foundation that is easily noted. After retirement, Munene's achievements will be explored, as well.

Rev. Japhet Miano Mutugi (1920 -)

Japhet Miano Mutugi was born around 1920 in Kianjang'a sub location, Mwerua Location of Ndia near Baricho Town and got his early education at Kiburu primary school where he undertook his sub-standard A and B from 1931 to 1932. Kiburu was sponsored by the Anglican Church. Japhet later left Kiburu to join Giachiira primary school, in the present day Kairungu Anglican church, which was sponsored by African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA), 1934 to 1935, for his Primary Four. In 1936, he joined another AIPCA school, Kihuti primary, in the present day Nyeri County. During the State of Emergency (1952 – 1960), these schools were closed by the colonial government.

In 1936, Japhet joined Kagumo Government African School, Nyeri and later Alliance High School, Kikuyu, in the present day, Kiambu County (1940 to 1941). From 1942 to 1943, he joined the Combined Training School, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where he undertook professional studies as a Postal Clerk and Telegraphics. In 1944, he began his working career as a sub post master. Ultimately, he was posted to various stations: Mitubiri, Kerugoya, Kiganjo and Meru up to 1950. Between 1951 and 1961, he taught post master-ship, telegraphy and telephone operator-ship at Mbagathi College, Nairobi where he notes with sadness that, there were no women

doing such jobs in those days. Still at Mbagathi, he undertook studies in Accountancy and subsequently passed stages 1, 2, and 3 of the London School of Accountancy.

Upon graduating as a qualified Accountant, he transferred his services, from Postmaster to Accounts and Finance Department in 1970. This move inspires the youth in the fact that it is never late to swoop or change professions and thereby move to a greener pasture land. With time, Japhet headed various sections; for example, telephone accounts, telegraph accounts, savings bank, and postal accounts among others. He retired from the Post Office on 31st December 1979. By then he had risen through the ranks to the post of a Senior Accountant. He was instrumental in bringing postal services to many parts of Kirinyaga including the current Baricho Post office.

Although Japhet had always been an active lay member of the Anglican church, particularly since his being saved and joining the *balokole* revival movement in 1959, he was not yet an ordained minister. In 1980, after his retirement from the postal corporation, he answered the call to serve in the sacred ministry. He subsequently joined St. Andrews' College of Theology and Development, Kabare, to prepare for ordination as a priest in the Anglican Church. After the subsequent preparations, Japhet was made an Anglican Deacon on 1st April 1980; and ordained as a full priest in December 1980. As a priest, he became the Vicar of Kamuruana, Kiandangae and Getuya parishes. He retired on 30th June 1990 after ten years of active service as a clergy. In addition he and his family were instrumental to development of their home church at Getuya particularly the vicarage as well as a Community Centre which he envisioned as a place where youth would receive skills and business training.

Upon his retirement as a church minister, Japhet became a polished farmer who successfully attended to his family businesses. He also became a roving pastor, moving from one church to another whenever he got invitations. He also doubled as a counselor, especially among pupils, students in school, and to the general public

– all by invitation. As an eye witness, I can confirm that his Getuya home is always a bee-hive of activities. One could hardly sit down for a long time before hearing visitors trouping in for this or that. In his retirement, Japhet has served as a member of Boards of Governor in the various schools. Examples include: Mutira Girls', Kiburu Secondary School, and Karimaini Secondary School.

In 2006, Japhet got a stroke which greatly weakened him physically. In view of this, he cut his activities minimally. In 2010, he felt a strong urge that compelled him to visit all the parishes that he had previously served and preach to them if he was given a chance. This move was ultimately achieved. On Sunday, 24th October 2010, he and his entire family assembled at Getuya Church for a thanksgiving prayer upon his attainment of 91 years.

Concerning his family, Japhet was married to Anna Wambui, a primary school teacher, in 1948, under Kikuyu customary law, a marriage that was solemnized in 1950 at Kiandangae church. Japhet has some of the most educated children in the old Mutira pastorate and the larger Kirinyaga County. In particular, his first born, Dr. Jamleck Mutugi is a trained veterinary surgeon with a PhD from UK. Additionally, he has worked in the agricultural sector nationally and internationally in countries such as Uganda, Zimbabwe and Rwanda. He is retired and spends his time in intellectual pursuits and national community service such as chair of the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, council member Kenyatta University and Commission for Higher Education. Prof. Marion W. Mutugi, his daughter-in-law, has a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Genetics and teaches at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). Marion, an active member of Kirinyaga professional group, has a passion for transfer of technology to communities and unsuccessfully contested the Ndia parliamentary seat in 2007. Another son of Japhet Mutugi is Harrison Kariuki, a renowned architect; Eva Gaitha a retired administrator and councillor in Kiambu (where she is married); James Githinji a retired postal officer; the late Elis Mwaniki, a post master, among others. Together with

his wife Anna, Japhet's family consists of 10 children, over 30 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

In addition, Japhet boasts of having schooled with the respected former Cabinet Minister in both Moi and Kenyatta governments, Dr. Jeremiah Nyaga; at Government school, Kagumo. He also remembers his other classmates as: the late retired chief Erastus Mwai Ngunju, Leonard Mwangi Gathuki, Eliud Njiraini Macuki, Isaiah Mathenge of Kiamaina, Machina wa Nyaga alias Timothy Machina – 1936 to 1939.

In conclusion, Japhet looks at the old Mutira pastorate with pride, noting that the young generation of leaders is working hard enough to raise the flag of progress even higher. As he cuts down his busy schedule, due to the 2006 stroke, and of course due to old age, Japhet belongs to the category of people that laid the egg that is hatching today. Certainly, he is one of the oldest living clergy of Mutira parish to date.

Rev. Jephthah Kiara Gathaka (1948 -)

Rev. Jephthah Kiara Gathaka was born about the year 1948, at Gitama village, Kanyeki-ini sub-location, Mutira location, in the present day Kirinyaga County. Interestingly, there were no records kept because his parents were not literate and there were no birth records in the rural areas. Gathaka was baptised by Rev. Johana Muturi in 1961, and confirmed by Bishop Obadiah Kariuki in 1964, at Emmanuel Church, Mutira. He attended Mutitu Primary School (1958 – 1964) where he sat for Kenya Primary Education (KPE); and later joined Kenyan College Secondary School – Nairobi (1965 to 1968), where he sat for the East African Certificate of Education. He enrolled through British tutorial college for correspondence courses in Accounts, Salesmanship and Sales Management. He attained a certificate in elementary book keeping and a Diploma in Sales Management. He worked in various places as a salesman/sales manager and book keeper which included General Bookshop in Kerugoya and Seifee Bakeries in Mombasa.

Gathaka was ordained as an Anglican Church of Kenya Priest on 14th December 1975 after an ordination certificate course, 1973-1974, at MacGregor Bible College in the present day Murang'a County. Previously, he had served as a Sunday school teacher and youth leader in Mutira parish. He was also a member of the Kenyan Anglican Youth Organisation (KAYO), Diocese of Mount Kenya Committee (1967 – 1973). After his ordination (1975), he was posted to serve as a Curate in Mutira Parish. Then he became the first Vicar (priest in charge) of a newly created parish, Kagio, from 1976 to April 1978. As a result of his exemplary performance as a Parish Minister, Gathaka was appointed the first Administrative Secretary of the newly created Diocese of Mt. Kenya East and Personal Assistant to Bishop David Gitari (later Archbishop of Kenya) in May 1978. During this period, he enriched his knowledge by pursuing courses in Youth Leadership, Church Accounting and Management, Effective Management, Advanced Christian Leadership (Haggai Institute, Singapore) and Foundation of Christian Communication and Print Communication (Daystar University, Kenya). At the same time, (1976 -1982) he enrolled for further theological studies by correspondence through London Bible College and managed to qualify for the Australian College of Theology Diploma and Licentiate in Theology. Later on (1984-1985), he joined Melbourne University's Ridley College in Australia for a Bachelor of Theology degree, where he also did a course in Communications.

Upon his return to Kenya in 1986, Gathaka was appointed the Diocesan Director of Communications, which involved coordination of the Diocesan departments of public relations, electronic media, print media and research and statistics. In this, he prepared press releases for the diocese; and also coordinated exhibitions during the Agricultural shows. Additionally, he wrote proposals for funding for the communication activities in the diocese, while at the same time representing the diocese in many forums. He was also a visiting lecturer at St Andrews College of Theology and Development, Kabare, where he taught Christian worship, Communication and Parish administration. As a lecturer, Gathaka remembers some of

his good students who made great impacts to the society as including: Bishop Daniel Munene Ngoru, Archdeacon Ephantus Njagi Muriuki, Rev Jonah Njeru of Embu, Ven Jane Mwangangi, and Rev Lydia Mwaniki who completed her PhD in New Testament in 2010, in the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, among others. Coupled with this, Gathaka was also the secretary for 18 diocesan committees and four boards of the Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Mount Kenya East.

In August 1988, Gathaka was seconded to the Bible Society of Kenya (BSK) as a Marketing Manager, where he was in charge Bible distribution in the country. It is during his tenure that the promotion of reading Bible was given much attention. The period also witnessed the recruitment of many members from various Christian denominations in Kenya to support Bible translation and distribution. From here, Gathaka was seconded by the Diocese of Mt. Kenya East to the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), October 1989 to December 1995, where he was requested to start the Department of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation (JPR). In turn, it is imperative to appreciate that JPR deals with issues that concern the church and society, particularly matters that relate to the socio-economic and political affairs. Moreover, the programme deals with advocacy, especially speaking and intervening for the underprivileged and the poor in the country as well as advocating for justice where it is perverted or denied. To this end, it was Gathaka's duty to organise the churches to call for good governance, respect, protection and promotion of human rights in the country.

With regard to the struggle for a democratic Kenyan society, in the 1980s and 90s, Gathaka was in the frontline, as he gallantly teamed up with those who agitated for the repeal of section 2A of the Constitution of Kenya. This section, entrenched in the constitution in 1982, practically changed Kenya to a one party state and outlawed formation of any other political party apart from the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU). Through JPR programme, he was able to conduct seminars in the districts to bring awareness to the citizens on participatory democracy and human rights.

After retirement from NCKC in December 1995 Gathaka founded *The Ecumenical Centre for Justice and Peace* (ECJP) in January 1996 together with a few church leaders to fill the gap which, they felt, was being left out as NCKC was “not being pragmatic enough in the areas of civic education and advocacy.”¹ He thus became the Executive Director, a position he holds to date. In forming ECJP, Gathaka and his team felt that they wanted to keep the momentum of demanding for democratic changes in the country. According to Gathaka, there was also a feeling that other churches which were not in NCKC or were Roman Catholic Church were not benefiting from civic education. In Gathaka’s understanding of ecumenism, working with people of other faiths such as Muslims is critical in building a harmonious nation – and for a peaceful co-existence.

Gathaka’s approach to ecumenism puts much emphasis on “religious dialogue” – a phenomenon that requires an appreciation of religious diversity and inter-relations. In turn, he follows a trajectory that is also seen in the works of scholars such as Wilfred Cantwell Smith and John Hick. This “religious pluralism” approach sets out on the premise that Christianity is not necessarily the be-all and end-all of all religion and religious discourses. Rather, it has to be in constant dialogue with other faiths that claim to know a supernatural deity.² In the nature of things, ECJP decided that they needed an inclusive and participatory forum where Christians, Muslims and people of other faiths were included in civic education; and where professionals, politicians and the civil society in the grassroots level could bring their diverse experiences in deliberating on the socio-economic and political issues of their country.

As the Executive Director of Ecumenical Centre for Justice and Peace (ECJP), he has attended various courses on Human Rights

¹Rev Gathaka noted during our interviews, 23rd October 2010, at Kenyatta University Mombasa Campus.

²See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Faith and Belief* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).

in Canada (1991), Denmark (1996) and Ghana (1997). He has also attended a course on Democratic elections, conflict resolution and management, in USA (2001); and other courses in project management - locally and overseas. In 2005 he was elected the Chairman of New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD)/ Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Kenya chapter. In this, he supervised the Kenya's 'country self assessment process' and also accompanied the President of the Republic His Excellency Mwai Kibaki to the Heads of State and Governments Implementing Forum in Banjul, Gambia, in June 2006 and Accra, Ghana, in 2007, where the Kenyan 'Country report' was presented and discussed by the heads of state.

By the end of 2010, Gathaka was working hard to implement civic education on democracy and good governance, environmental conservation, accountability and use of devolved funds, and the enhancing the fight against corruption. In so doing, he hoped to help the citizens to discuss the significance of participatory democracy; electing responsible leaders in their respective Counties, proper use of tax payers' money, good stewardship of natural resources and citizens fight against the corruption menace. All this was geared towards building and re-building a cohesive and prosperous inter-religious and inter-ethnic Country.

Certainly, the pain of the birth of the old Mutira parish, and African Christianity in general, is not in vain, as Gathaka's life times have so far demonstrated that, a mustard seed can grow into a huge tree. Clearly, the early pains will never go unnoticed, as a tiny village centre, Mutira, has become the beacon that has mapped out the direction to Kenya and the rest of the world.

Dr. Moses M. Njoroge (1951 -)

Dr. Moses Mwangi Njoroge is the long serving principal of St Andrews College of Theology and Development, Kabare. He was born on January 15, 1951, in the current day Murang'a County. He was the only child of his parents, Shadrack Njoroge and Milkah Wambui for a long time before his younger brother Daniel Maina

was born in 1962. Moses was brought up in a Christian family and received Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour on Wednesday, March 7, 1966 at St John's Church Karimaini in the old Mutira Parish.

With regard to his early schooling, Moses Njoroge started his initial primary school education in 1961 at Lower Baricho Primary School. He transferred to Karimaini Primary School in 1963 where he sat for his Kenya Primary Education (K. P.E.) in 1968; and passed well. He was offered a place in form one at Kagumo High School, in the present day, Nyeri County; where he completed his O-Level education in 1972. Subsequently, he got employed as an Untrained Teacher in January 1973 at Getuya Primary School. He transferred to Karimaini Primary School in 1974 and was immediately recommended for in-service course at Kagumo Teachers Training College. He completed the course in 1977 and passed as P1 teacher while still teaching at Karimaini. While teaching, he enrolled to study theology through Theological Education by Extension (T.E.E.) for three years and did Nairobi Certificate of Religious Studies (N.C.R.S.) from the University of Nairobi. He taught for 9 years at Karimaini Primary School, as he served as a lay minister in Mutira Parish, before joining the ministry of the Church. Moses was licensed as a Lay-Reader of St John's Church Karimaini, an out-station of Mutira parish, in December 1979. He served the church at Mutira Parish in this capacity for 2 years, a ministry he claims to have enjoyed.

With regard to his marriage, Njoroge married his dear wife, Mary Mwangi, on July 14, 1979, at St John's Church Karimaini. During their colourful occasion, Mr. Jason Kinyua Mwangi and his wife Nancy Kinyua were their best couple. Moses and Mary are blessed with 4 children: 2 boys and 2 girls. With regard to ordination, Moses completed 6 months training at St Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare in 1980, after which he was accepted in the sacred ministry of the church; where he was made a Deacon in June 1980 and ultimately ordained into a full priest in the Anglican Order in December of the same year. After his Ordination ceremony, he continued to teach at Karimaini Primary School, but

now served as a Tent Maker – a phenomenon where an ordained church minister serves the church without necessarily relying on her for a monthly stipend. To this end, he combined the role of a classroom teacher and that of a school chaplain. And even though he loved his two roles, he had to reluctantly throw in the towel when he reluctantly agreed to leave Karimaini primary school so as to join the full time ministry of the Church. And this came about after Bishop (later Archbishop) Dr David M. Gitari persuaded him successfully to leave teaching and join the church on full time basis. He thus accepted after much consultation with his wife, Mary.

As a full time church worker, Moses Njoroge was appointed by Bishop Gitari as the Religious Education Adviser of the then Kirinyaga District (presently Kirinyaga County) in January 1981. He worked under the late Rev. Godfrey Mureithi who was Education Secretary in the former Diocese of Mt Kenya East. He did this work for 2 years. In September 1984, Moses was offered a place to do B.D. (Bachelor of Divinity degree) for 3 years at St Paul's University. He graduated in June 1987 and was immediately posted at Kanja Parish in Embu as the Vicar in-charge for a period of six months. He was later transferred to St Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare, in January 1988 - as a Tutor. In January 1989, he was appointed as the Acting Principal of the College for 8 months when the Principal, Rev Graham Kings, went for leave in U.K. In September 1989, Moses was awarded a scholarship by the Anglican Church of Canada, Toronto through Dr David M Gitari to do a Masters Degree in Theology at Wycliffe College in Canada. He graduated in May 1991. On arrival from Canada in July 1991, Moses was appointed as the Principal of St Andrew's College for 2½ years.

In 2000, Njoroge was awarded scholarship to do doctoral studies at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in U.S.A through his former lecturer at St Paul's Limuru, Dr Grant LeMarquand. He studied at home while still working as a lecturer and the Principal of St. Andrews College of Theology and Development, Kabare, as well. He graduated in May, 2005 with Doctor of Ministry (D.Min).

Owing to his outstanding spiritual oversight, Moses Njoroge was installed and collated as a Canon of the Anglican Church at St Thomas Cathedral, Kerugoya in 1991. Despite being the youngest Canon at that time, he was given the stall of St Augustine of Hippo. In January 1993, Njoroge was transferred from St Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare, to St Thomas Cathedral, Kerugoya, as the Provost, on the basis that he was more of a pastor than an administrator. He served as a Provost for 3 years.

In January, 1996 Moses Njoroge was appointed as the Director of T.E.E. in the Diocese of Kirinyaga. He undertook this responsibility for one year. In January 1997, he was appointed the Administrative Secretary of the Diocese of Kirinyaga. He reluctantly accepted this administrative post because he strongly believed that he had been called to be a teacher and not an administrator – as the post demanded. In the ensuing Bishopric elections of 1997, after David Gitari got elected as the Archbishop of the Anglican church of Kenya hence a vacancy was created in Kirinyaga Diocese, Njoroge came a close second after Rev. Canon Daniel Munene Ngoru. The newly elected Bishop, Daniel Ngoru, however appointed Njoroge as the Vicar General of the Diocese, a senior position that comes immediately after that of the Bishop. That is, when the Bishop is absent, the Vicar General can share Diocesan board meetings as the acting head, and even lead in implementing important decisions for the Diocese.

In February 1998, Moses Njoroge was called by Bishop Daniel Munene at the Diocesan office, Kutus, and was requested to take over from Dr Ben Knighton as the Principal. Dr Knighton was a Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) worker who had been recalled home by the same organisation. Again, Njoroge was reluctant and he begged for time to go and consult his wife Mary. At this stage, it is significant to appreciate that he owes a lot of his successes in church ministry to his focused and supportive wife Mary. As a matter of fact, Mary is a teacher by profession and a lay-leader of their local church, Karimaini. She has played a very significant role in his ministerial formation and theological studies of her husband, as

she was constantly consulted whenever a serious decision has to be made. In his view, it would have been completely impossible for him to have gone this far without Mary's moral, spiritual, and physical support.

When Bishop Ngoru approached Njoroge to return to St Andrews College, Kabare as a principal for the second time (1998), it took more than 2 weeks before he gave a positive answer, as Mary's critical view had to be sought. And when she approved the idea after a prayerful period of time, he accepted to undertake the job. Since 1998, he is the Principal to date (2011). His Vision and Mission is to make St Andrew's College, Kabare a fully fledged University. Currently, St Andrew's is the largest Provincial theological College in the Anglican Church of Kenya.

In his personal belief, a certificate that is more than five years old stands obsolete. He further argues that when we stop learning we eventually begin to become illiterate, though we tend to be unconscious about it. He further says that if one doesn't know what he or she is looking for, one will never get it; and that we should learn to see an opportunity in every problem.

Hon Rev. Mutava Musyimi (1952 -)

Another outstanding clergyman from the old Mutira parish is Rev Mutava Musyimi who is the current Member of Parliament for Gachoka, Embu County. Born in Riakanau in the present day Mbeere District, Musyimi was educated at Riakanau Primary School (1959-1965), Kangaru Secondary School (both O and A-level education, 1969-1971); University of Nairobi (1972-75) where he got his Bachelor of Education (English) in 1975; University of London where he got his Bachelor of Divinity in 1979; and Trinity Divinity School, Illinois, USA, where he got his Master of Theology Degree in 1989.

With regard to his roots, Mutava Musyimi is a Kamba by birth, but he grew up in Mwea after his grandparents moved from Machakos to the then lower parts of Nyeri district (now Kirinyaga and Mbeere) in 1928. By then, his father was a small boy. It was at Riakanau that

Musyimi's grandparents became first generation Christians in the area in 1946 and renewed their marriage vows in church. His parents also joined the church with his father becoming a lay leader of the Anglican Church. He later ventured in to politics becoming a councillor in the 1950s, a position he held for 25 years. The older man, who was assassinated in 1977, was a close friend of former minister and father of two former MPs, Jeremiah Nyagah.

Concerning his church ministry, Musyimi was made an Anglican Deacon in 1988 by Archbishop Manasses Kuria and subsequently ordained as a priest by Bishop David Gitari of the then Diocese of Mount Kenya East in 1989. Coming from a staunch Anglican family, he is son of ? son of Stephen Kisilu who was made an Anglican lay reader for Riakanau and Kiandangae churches at Emmanuel Church Mutira in early 1960s. Musyimi was also baptized at Mutira Mission Centre, which was the headquarter of the vast area that made the parish. Upon his ordination Musyimi, who served the Nairobi Baptist Church as a Pastor from 1979 to 1993, was officially seconded by the Anglican Church to the Baptist church. As such, he never served in the Anglican Church; rather, he went straight to the Baptist church.³ According to Canon Joseph Ngooro, Musyimi was later seconded by the Anglican Church to serve in the National Council of Churches (NCKK), which is the political wing of the protestant churches of Kenya (1993-2007). In 2002, he explained his call in the church ministry thus: "It was at Kenyatta [University] in 1973 that I felt the call to the Christian ministry and after college I did quite a bit of volunteer work with the Baptist Church despite the fact that my background was Anglican."⁴ He was later to serve the Nairobi Baptist Church for 14 years before joining the NCKK. Through the Baptist Church, he did a Bachelor of Divinity course in London and

³Interview with Canon Joseph Mwangi Ngooro at his Gathuthi-ini home, Kirinyaga West, October 28, 2010.

⁴Hon Musyimi's interview with journalists in 2002.

later a master of Theology at the Trinity Divinity School, in Illinois, USA.

In an interview, Musyimi was quoted as saying that he stopped being a 'simple preacher' and started tackling 'social issues' on coming back to Nairobi after completing his Masters degree course and the controversial streak in him emerged in 1988, when he was one of those who vehemently opposed the government of former President Moi when it sought to remove the security of tenure of judges and the attorney general.⁵

As the General Secretary of the giant, National Council of Churches (NCCCK), Musyimi became a household name in Kenya as he was always covered by the media fighting for democracy, reforms and justice for all. By teaming up with other clerics from the mainline churches who were decrying injustices of the then KANU regime, Musyimi compares well with Frank Chikane and Allan Boesak of South Africa during the struggle against apartheid. He can also be compared with the Rev Dr Martin Luther King Junior (1929-68) who championed the rights of black Americans in his Civil Rights movement. Living under constant threats from the establishment for exposing its nakedness, Musyimi soldiered on in the so-called Ufungamano initiative to demand constitutional reforms. In this initiative, Christian and Muslim leaders teamed up to urge the government to demand change and good governance free of corruption. For long he was a leading player in the constitution making process. He was the chair of the Ufungamano Constitution Review Initiative which merged with the Parliamentary Review Commission in late 2000 to avert a possible constitutional crisis in Kenya. Later he became a delegate at the Bomas Constitutional Conference but withdrew after three months reasoning that the parley had generated into an acrimonious House of Babel.

As the NCCCK boss, Musyimi made useful contacts abroad which contributed to a successful tenure at the the council. When he

⁵<http://kenyapolitical.blogspot.com/2007/04/rev-mutava-musyimi-is-he-eyeing-state.html>

announced in 2007 that he was joining elective politics, Musyimi had left a rich financial legacy with investments totalling Kshs 700 million in various commercial projects countrywide. These included a state-of-the-art headquarters, the Jumuiya place, along the city's Lenana Road. Away from NCCCK, Musyimi was also chair of the National Anti-Corruption Steering Committee (2004-2007) and chairman of a media outfit, the Distance broadcasting Limited, which runs a vernacular radio station, Mwaitu 2007). When Rev. Mutava Musyimi announced his sudden resignation as the secretary general of the influential National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), many were quick to ask: What is he up to? Analysts were quick to speculate that the churchman was headed for a political career and that he would be vying for the Gachoka parliamentary seat in Mbeere district then held by a Cabinet Minister and a presidential aspirant Joseph Nyagah under Orange Democratic Party (ODM). In the December 27, 2007 elections, Musyimi won under the banner of Party of National Unity (PNU).

As Musyimi retired in 2007, as the boss of NCCCK, at the age of 55, he had two grown children. His first daughter Mweni Nyokabi is a graduate in Law from the University of Cardiff. She later completed a Masters degree at the Trinity Divinity School in Chicago; while his younger son, Syano Musyimi, is pursuing his PhD at the University Of Southampton, UK. His wife Nyambura is the principal partner at the law firm, Musyimi and Company Advocates.

Earlier in 2002 interview, Musyimi had hinted that he would probably have considered the idea of becoming a compromise opposition presidential candidate but insisted it was up to the then opposition parties to make that decision. He said then,

I like the opportunity I have to be a secretary general of NCCCK [National Council of Churches of Kenya]. It is a very privileged

position and it would take a lot more for me to resign from the job. I would have to be convinced that what I am going into has added value and that there are things I could do through that position that I cannot do here.⁶

He added rather tellingly that his wife and he had been praying about the idea of becoming the country's president for five years following multiple requests to vie for the post from people from all walks of life, "but I do not think I have harboured presidential ambitions."⁷

In analysing theo-political ministry of Mutava Musyimi, it is crucial to underline that he was, before 1990, just another obscure preacher of a little known church, as the *Daily Nation* newspaper once categorized him. He always preached hard hitting prophetic sermons in the same breath as Presbyterian's Rev. Dr. Timothy Njoya or Anglican Church's Bishop David Gitari, boldly tackling the most sensitive social and political issues of the day. But his homilies were never heard outside the walls of the Nairobi Baptist Church on Ngong Road. The media was yet to discover the intrepid young preacher. One day all that changed. The KANU government had increasingly become draconian since 1982 when it made Kenya a de jure one party state and ruthlessly clamped down on dissent. Towards the end of the 1980s brutalized Kenyans became increasingly restive.

It was within the context of this oppressive atmosphere that Christians sat in the Nairobi Baptist Church listening to Mutava tear at the excess of the Moi's KANU government. The congregation sat squirming in the pews, stunned by the audacity of their pastor, some possibly wishing they were not there to listen to what in officialdom would certainly be concluded as high treason. When the contents of his sermons later began to get into the headlines of the local dailies, Mutava went into hiding as the secret police looked for him

⁶<http://kenyapolitical.blogspot.com/2007/04/rev-mutava-musyimi-is-he-eyeing-state.html>

⁷<http://kenyapolitical.blogspot.com/2007/04/rev-mutava-musyimi-is-he-eyeing-state.html>

everywhere. When he finally emerged in the early 1990s, Mutava had been transformed from an obscure preacher into an important newsmaker with every media house dispatching a reporter to the Ngong Road sanctuary every Sunday to look for important perspectives as the country went into political ferment in earnest.

It is common knowledge that Mutava has presidential ambitions and in recommending him as the next president of Kenya in 2012, Prof Makau Mutua, the *Dean and SUNY Distinguished Professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo Law School and Chair of the Kenya Human Rights Commission*, avers:

He [Mutava Musyimi] is the quintessential “Mundu”. He is the perfect composite of the Kikuyu, Kamba, Embu and Meru. He is Gema itself. He speaks all the four languages and has extensive kinship ties and deep cultural links with all of them. He could be a member of any of these groups on instant recall. He is a “Kamba” who is an MP in Embu. I do not know of any other senior politician from the region who can claim to be a true melting pot of the four groups. Mr. Musyimi is a powerful and eloquent orator. He cuts the figure of a statesman. He was touted once as a compromise presidential candidate. He enjoys international support, including from some quarters in the United States. While at the NCKK, he cultivated grassroots support among the laity and clergy across the country. He is connected to wealthy businesspeople in the Mt Kenya region. If he runs – which I bet he will – Mr Musyimi could be a formidable candidate.⁸

As we mark the first centenary celebration for Afro-Anglican Christianity in Mutira (1912 to 2012), the name of Mutava Musyimi cannot be left out. He catapults a little village, Mutira, and makes it shine in the map of the world just as Barrack Obama changed Kogelo village of Western Kenya when he became the president of the United

⁸[http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion Why%20Mutava%20Musyimi %20is%20a%20man%20to%20watch%20/-/440808/1048078 /-/item/1/-/7o4lpq/-/index.html](http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion%20Why%20Mutava%20Musyimi%20is%20a%20man%20to%20watch%20/-/440808/1048078/-/item/1/-/7o4lpq/-/index.html)

States. In Musyimi's case, history has been made that even a clergyman can serve successfully in political offices without compromising their cherished creeds. Mutava Musyimi is such a man who makes Mutira proud. It is worth watching for his next actions.

Conclusion

The chapter has been able to trace some of the leading post independent clergymen with Mutira roots, who in turn learnt from the pioneer pentagon of Pioneer African Clergy. The chapter was however unable to analyze the pedigree of the late Rev. Godfrey Muriithi (1946-1998). At one time, he was the Diocesan Vicar-General and Administrative Secretary. Another notable clergyman from the old Mutira pastorate is Rev. Josphat Wanji Mugweru (1946-1992). While Godfrey came from Kiabarikiri Village, Kimandi Parish near Kerugoya Town, Mugweru came from Kiaga Parish, near Kagio Town. Mugweru died of brain tumour as he pursued his PhD; while Godfrey M. Munge died of diabetes – both in their prime ages. In our second volume, the two will be treated in details.

CHAPTER SIX

Some Outstanding Clergywomen

Introduction

Women ordination began in Kirinyaga Anglican Diocese in 1992 after a fierce opposition to it from 1986. As such, women ordination in the locality was problematic – as both history and the patriarchal nature of the society militated against its success. As women ordination finally took root, the chapter will attempt to demonstrate that, it turned out to be successful, as some women went on to raise through the ranks to become Archdeacons, Rural Deans, Provosts, Directors, and Canons among other high ranking ecclesiastical positions. The aim of the chapter thus is to appreciate the critical role of women clergy who have gallantly participated in this “new struggle” to deconstruct patriarchy and clericalism, and thereby reconstruct the society for the betterment of us all. To this end, the chapter has only sampled women Archdeacons with Mutira roots. It also seeks to demonstrate that the African church has come of age as it now ordains women, and even elevates them to senior positions in church leadership. If Mutira Mission was elevated into a Pastorate in 1923, should it be elevated into a larger unit in 2012, now that there is no man or woman in church ministry (cf Galatians 3:28)? To this end, Archdeacons Mary Koigu, Winfred Munene and Jane Mwangangi have been sampled.

Ven. Canon Mary W. Koigu

Mary Koigu is a Senior Clergy in the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi, an Archdeacon, and a mother who symbolises the new dawn with regard to the successes of women ministry as ordained priests, a phenomenon that could not be imagined before 1980s. Her parents are the late Jonathan Kinyua and Priscilla Wambui who were members of ACK Kiamaina church, an out-station of the old Mutira parish. Both parents were committed Christians who brought them up in a Christian way. They exposed her to the God of Christendom at a tender age; and she was baptized as an infant. She was later introduced to the Sunday school where she started learning the word of God. Her father who was an evangelist had started a fellowship for his children in the house where he taught them how to pray and sing for the lord. He also taught them how to trust and ‘wait for the lord even in difficult situations.’

She was educated at Kiamaina primary school, a school which is sponsored by the Anglican church of Kenya. At school, they were taught Anglican spirituality, worship among others. As she grew older, she became a Sunday school teacher; and subsequently joined the youths’ evangelism group and prayer groups. All these gave her more experience and made her to grow deeper in faith. In turn, it gave an earlier preparation for the ministry of the church.

In 1976 she joined Mutira Girls’ High School which was then both day and boarding school. She was a boarder and this is where she witnessed the devil at work, and eventually felt called to reverse the devil’s gains. For as she observed, some of her schoolmates could sneak out of the school in the old hours of the night, buy beer, put it in their thermos flask, and drink it at night. Others could sneak out ‘hunting’ for men at night. Now and then, they could experience cases where one or two girls would procure illegal abortions, as promiscuity nearly defined the school. She remembers one evening when a girl gave birth to a baby boy and as she was going to throw him to the latrine, the watchman spotted her and quickly stopped her. She was thereafter reported to the police who in turn took action against her. It is from such backgrounds that Mary Koigu began her

church ministry albeit unconsciously, as she found herself always counselling her fellow students, especially with regard to dangers of sexual promiscuity.

While at Mutira Girls, where she was the Christian Union Vice-Chair lady, a sister from Church Army was invited to come and minister to the students. As fate would have it, Mary was deeply moved by her ministry, a ministry that she greatly envied. By the time she completed her O-levels, the desire to serve as a church minister had gone a notch higher to an extent that she had already resolved to go for it. It is from there that she went to the parish office at Mutira mission centre where she shared her feelings with the then vicar, Rev. Peter Karanja (1980-81). Subsequently, the parish priest called the local church council (LCC) who interviewed her, and later the whole parish council (PCC) interrogated her. During the interrogations by the church elders, Mary remembers one elder lowering his glasses and gazing at her asking: "Mary do you want to become *Bwana* [priest] - what are you lacking? Have you ever seen a lady clergy?" she answered him, "I do not know what God want to make out of me, mine is to obey." After serious deliberations where various members of the council took different positions over her fate, it was finally resolved that she be recommended to the bishop for the sacred ministry. Later, the then Bishop David Gitari invited her for another interview under the bishop's examining chaplains. As in the other two, she also passed the third interview. In 1981, she joined St. Andrews College of Theology and Development, Kabare, where she found herself in a class of 15 students and where only 2 were ladies. That is, the late Rev. Catherine Kithinji w/o Muta from Embu (1960-2005) and herself. By then, their principal was the retired Bishop of Mbeere, Gideon Ileri.

Upon completing theological training, she was posted at ACK Ngirambu parish, in the old Kabare pastorate. And since women ordination in Kenya began as late as the early 1990, she was merely posted as a church worker on December 14, 1983. At Ngirambu parish, she remembers having to contend with long distances; for example, she used to walk for about 10 kilometres daily because, by

then, the parish had many congregations which were far from one another. To compound the situation, her monthly stipend was only Kshs. 600 (\$ 7.5), which was not enough for daily upkeep; it was a total struggle in all fronts.

On December 9, 1984, she was elevated to a Deaconess, a position where one remained in the house of laity but was recognised by the church as close to a Deacon or even a Priest. And since women were not getting ordained, the post of a Deaconess was the highest rank that she could reach by then. After being made a Deaconess, she was ultimately given a blue dress, a half colour from behind and a head cover as the new working uniform. The big challenge was when they (Deaconesses), as church workers, were made to wear the same ecclesiastical attires worn by lay readers despite their rigorous training in theology – yet lay readers were not training in theological schools. Conversely, their male counterparts in the college were immediately made Deacons, which meant they wore clerical shirts and collars; were allowed to head parishes – where they could fortunately afford to bargain with elders for more allowances for travel, hospitality among other things - unlike Deaconesses. A year after ladies were made Deaconesses their male counterparts would be ordained as priests, hence promoted and recognised as heads of parishes. Sadly, women Deaconesses were made to work under men, some of whom had academically performed poorer than their female counterparts. As a result, some men would react badly by ‘oppressing’ them – assigning them cooking duties, teaching catechism which is best done by church evangelists. The other challenge was that women in the ministry were neither allowed to attend board of finance meetings nor ask any question in other meetings. Theirs was to cook tea for the PCC members and to serve them which was so humbling; and was a big challenge. Asking for a financial issue was evidence that one did not have a calling to the ministry.

Mary married Martin Koigu in 1985, after two years of courtship. She describes him as “the man after my own heart.” Martin and Mary are blessed with three children: Joshua Koigu, Jonathan Kinyua and Eunice Hope Nyaguthii. Later Mr. Koigu who is the

founder and director of Ebenezer children's home, Nairobi, which caters for more than 100 children, wished to have her join him in the Diocese of Nairobi. Sadly, when she went to David Gitari, the then Bishop, to request an inter-diocesan transfer from Kirinyaga to Nairobi Diocese, the bishop was not pleased with her. He reminded her that the diocese of Kirinyaga had spent a lot of money in educating her yet she was contemplating leaving the Diocese. To him, it was a waste of resources. Despite this, Mary Koigu was able to join the Diocese of Nairobi in 1987, after the Bishop understood her request, and finally granted her permission.

In Nairobi Anglican Diocese, Mary Koigu remembers a strange case where the Bishop of Nairobi and the Archbishop of Kenya, Manassess Kuria, went on to introduce her as Deaconess Mary. Immediately, one Canon shot up and raised his hand in protest, and asked the Archbishop to explain the meaning of the title of deaconess because they knew a "deaconess" as an animal. He was asked by the Synod members to apologise, something which he did. As a Deaconess, she was posted at A.C.K St. Phillips, as a Curate, and later to St. Nicholas Children Home where she worked as an assistant director for 11 years. She was also attached to St. Francis Church. It took the diocese of Nairobi a long time to accept women ordination. Luckily, she was finally made a Deacon on November 7, 1993 and subsequently posted to St. Stephens' church. Today, St. Stephens' Church is the Cathedral of the entire Diocese of Nairobi. In July 13, 1997, she was a priest and sent to St. Michaels and All Angels as a vicar. In her new station as the priest-in-charge, she remembers, during her first day in the parish, requesting one lay reader to preach; and rather than preach the Gospel of love and tolerance, the lay reader shockingly said: "I wish to repent my sins because when I was told we have a vicar, I became excited - only to find it is a woman clergy."

Such remarks only helped in boldening her; hence strengthening her resolve in the ministry. Later, God used her in a mighty way. First, the church was a rented building hall - which was a city council nursery school during the week days. On Saturday, it was a club and

on Sunday it was a church. They had been in this hall for 16 years and no development was evident despite having men as heads of churches. She challenged them to 'do something about this' and they were able to raise money and finally purchased a piece of land and built a church. She later led them to move away from the rented hall to their newly built church. In 2002, she was appointed the 1st lady Archdeacon of Eastern Archdeaconry which was composed of 15 parishes and 23 clergy. In 2006, she was collated a Canon and given St. Albun's stall in the cathedral.

Ven. Canon Mary Koigu's message of inspiration is that, all things are possible with God; for God's plans are different from our plans (cf. Isaiah 55:8-9). "It is therefore important to humble oneself and God will lift us up." She says and reminds ladies, that 'Jesus came to give women dignity,' so that they can become better servants.

Ven. Winfred Munene (1966 -)

Ven Winfred Munene belongs to the category of third generation Clergy, of the old Mutira parish, who have played a prominent role in the growth of the church. She also symbolizes the success of women ordination where she has reached the level of an Archdeacon. She comes from Mutitu parish, about four kilometers from Mutira mission centre. Born in 1966 in a village called Gacatha, in the old Kabare parish, she joined the old Mutira parish by virtue of Marriage to Rev. Benson Munene of Mutitu parish, in 1995.

For her Primary Education, she was educated at Gacatha Primary and later Rwambiti Day Secondary school. Her call and desire to serve in the Church became so strong when she was in Secondary School and ultimately made a well-considered decision to be a servant in the Anglican Church at the appropriate time. Throughout her Secondary Education, her mind was fully set on Church Ministerial Career which she straight away pursued after completing her O-Level education. She joined St. Andrews College, Kabare, after passing both written and theory interviews; and graduated with a Diploma in Theology. She served in a Parish as a Curate for one and a half years; afterwards, she joined St. Paul's

University for Bachelor of Divinity programme and completed in 1996.

After graduation at St. Paul's, she served as a Curate in Mutira Parish for four months and was then appointed as a tutor at St. Andrew's College, Kabare, where she taught for one year. After Kabare, she served at Marsabit as a T.E.E Director in Northern Kenya for one year and then went for further studies in U.K and graduated with Masters of Arts in Pastoral Studies.

Upon her return to Kenya, the Bishop (Daniel Ngoru) appointed her as the Diocesan T.E.E Director, where she served for six years (2000-2005). In 2006 to date, she has been serving at A.C.K St. Thomas Cathedral in the capacity of a Provost. She was also inducted as the Archdeacon on 4th December 2009; and by 2010, she was appointed the Archdeacon of Cathedral Archdeaconry. This clearly shows that after one hundred years of Anglican Christianity, the dream of its pioneers is beginning to be experienced, as women clergy raise to the senior positions of Provosts, Archdeacons, and Administrative Secretaries etc. who knows? A woman bishop could be in the offing – even in the so called rural Dioceses!

Ven. Jane Nyaguthii Mwangangi

Archdeacon Jane Nyaguthii Mwangangi, of Nairobi Anglican diocese, was born in Kimandi location, Ndia Division, in the present day Kirinyaga central district. Jane is a product of the old Mutira pastorate. She is the first born in the family of Mr. Adonse Muthike Kabubo and Teresiah Wangeci Karuri. She began her primary school education at Gakoigo primary school in 1973 but later transferred to Kiamanyeki primary school when her parents relocated to the then Mwea Division of Kirinyaga District and settled there in 1976. It is at Kiamanyeki where she sat for her Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) in 1981. Jane was introduced to Anglican Christianity by her staunch Anglican parents, who were lay leaders in the local Kiamanyeki church. In church leadership, her father was a lay reader and vice-chair of the local church; while her mother was the Mother Union's (MU) secretary in the entire Gathigiriri

parish. In turn, Gathigiriri parish comprised of Gathigiriri church itself, the current Ndindiruku parish, Kiamanyeki church, Murubara parish, Kiumbu church among others.

Having been brought up in such a Christian environment, Jane became an active Sunday school teacher and choir member of Thiba parish and later Kiamanyeki church. Her desire to serve the Lord in these capacities was as a result of her parental mentorship. After her seven years in Primary school, she joined Karoti Girls high school; sat for O-Level certificate in 1985 and having attained a good grade that gave her automatic entry to form five, she was admitted at Mutira girls high school for 'A' levels, but she did not proceed due to lack of fees.

In 1987 to 1989 she trained at St. Andrews' College of Theology and Development, Kabare, and attained provincial certificate of theology and Nairobi university certificate of religious studies. After Ten years of service, Jane joined St. Paul's University for under graduate studies for three years (1998 to 2001). By 2010, she was undertaking a Master of Arts programme in religious studies at the University of Nairobi.

Jane has served in different capacities which have enriched her with wealth of experience. After studies at St. Andrew's college of theology and development, Kabare, she was commissioned as a lay reader and later an Anglican Deaconess. When the Anglican Church accepted women ordination in 1992, following a painful struggle, she was made an Anglican Deacon in December 1992 and subsequently ordained priest in 1993. She has served in the Dioceses of Mt. Kenya East, Kirinyaga, and Nairobi.

Jane has served in senior ecclesiastical positions starting with that of an Archdeacon, Rural Dean, Vicar, Curate, Deaconess, Pastoral Care Committees, Bishops' Examining Chaplain, Chairlady of Association of Women in the Ministry (ASWOM), Chaplain of the Mothers Union, Member of the Concerned African Women Theologians, member of the synod and in the standing committee of the synod, chairperson of house of clergy in the diocese of Nairobi and search committee. In 2011, she was also serving as a board

member of St. John community centre, CITC, Maridadi fabrics, Diocesan book shop and St. John's high school. She is Married to Rev. Japhet Mwangangi Katheranya and blessed with three Children Joshua, Caleb and Abigail.

Jane has traveled widely both locally and internationally and her trainings in leadership skills have made her to be a capable leader and pastor. She has the character of empowering other leaders which she calls, "widening the circle in leadership." Typically, she is a good motivator, counselor and a mentor. Interestingly, she ably balances her role as a Priest, Wife and Mother. She attributes all these achievements and experiences to God and to whom all glory should be given.

Like in the case of other stories of women church ministers (refer to Winfred Munene, Mary Koigu among others), Jane's case equally demonstrates that women too have made their impact in ecclesiastical matters. As Mutira Anglican mission marks its first centenary celebration, women ministry has demonstrated that the society is ripe even for a woman bishop.

Mutira Mission

CHAPTER SEVEN

Some Outstanding Lay Leaders

Introduction

The subject under this discussion in this chapter on sampling some outstanding lay leaders in the old Mutira pastorate, just as in the entire topic of the book, is an ambitious one; and as such, I cannot and do not mean to satisfy it. Nevertheless, I do wish to analyze some of the lay characters without claiming to be exhaustive. In so doing, I will attempt to ensure that I address the societal issues such as education, business, and family-hood among other issues in the course of the discussion.

Thomas M. Meero (1874 - 1964)

In tracing his original background, Thomas Meero came from Taveta in the present day Taita-Taveta County; in the coastal part of Kenya, near Mombasa. He was a trained carpenter, who was first invited to Kikuyu land by McGregor. In turn, McGregor had hired him to build his house at Weithaga, in the present day Murang'a County. And since Mutira Anglican Centre began as an out-station of Weithaga in 1911, as Mutira was by then part of Mbiri (Murang'a later Fort Hall) District, Meero must have first reached Mutira in 1909 that came to survey the land where Mutira Mission Centre was to stand later. Certainly, he was also part of the team that built the first church under the supervision of his mentor, McGregor. What is not clear is when he left Mutira, though it is clear that he returned later and got employed in the Mission Centre as a Catechist/teacher. In 1915, Meero was appointed catechist/evangelist at Mutira,

where he served remarkably well; for within five months of his appointment, the number of students at Mutira school rose from fourteen to forty. Though he achieved a lot, prior to his association with missionaries, not much is known about his Taveta family. In other words, was he a married man who abandoned his family in order to work with McGregor and other missionaries? Did he make any attempt of tracing his lineage in Taveta? As a matter of fact, he settled permanently at Mutira, over five hundred kilometres from Taveta – his birth place, where he is buried in the church compound.¹

According to Meero's nephew, Joseph Mwangi, son of Gatimu, who was in turn son of Thomas Meero, his grandfather never returned to settle in his place of birth, Taveta, on the borderline of Tanzania and Kenya, from 1900 till his death in 1964.² He however made short visits to his kin at Taveta thrice. In particular, he visited them during the great famine (*Ng'aragu ya Thika*) that had hit the country. He specifically went to look for food to feed his fellow mission workers at Mutira. Once they brought food from Taveta to Mutira, Meero's team went on with the mission work – as locusts had cleared the farms. Shortly after, heavy harvests were experienced in the locality surrounding Mutira pastorate.

From Mutira in 1909, Meero with a team of European missionaries left for Kigari Embu via Kabare. As a matter of fact, Mutira mission centre could have been established in 1909; but because of the delay caused by land transactions, the commencing of the mission work had to take place in 1911. Reportedly, the buying of land was completed in 1911, though the seriousness in starting the church can be said to have occurred in 1912.

In tracing his life as a pioneer African missionary, Meero first entered the mission work in Moshi, Tanzania, in June 1890. As noted

¹KNA: CMS 1/638: Mutira Log Book, entries for 15th June 1915, 9th November 1915.

²Interview with Joseph Mwangi Gatimu, at Roswam hotel, Kerugoya, on 20th November 2010. Mwangi who was born in 1958 was seven years old when Meero died in 1964.

earlier, his ancestral home, Taveta, is situated on the Kenyan side of the border with the republic of Tanzania. In such a situation, a person on the borderline could visit either side, provided he or she could find help. So Meero went to Moshi, Tanzania, and joined the Church Mission Society (CMS), which had already established a mission centre, in Moshi, in the then (Northern) Tanganyika, as Tanzania was then called. In the Moshi Mission Station, he was educated up to standard five. He also learnt carpentry. At the same time, Meero enrolled in the catechism class; which in turn, culminated into his baptism in 1894. He was confirmed in 1895 by Alfred R. Tucker, who was the 3rd Bishop of the then Eastern Equatorial Africa. Later in 1897, the Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa was divided into two: Diocese of Uganda, under Bishop Tucker and Diocese of Mombasa, under Bishop A.W Peel.

From there, he got very close with McGregor and his team of European missionaries, who had camped at Taveta side of the Kenyan border. This friendship developed after their constant meetings during the weekends – as Meero would from time to time visit his home in Taveta, and would excite the European missionaries who saw a literate African; and one who could be hired in the ongoing construction works. Upon his completion of studies and consequent return to Taveta in 1892, McGregor and his team approached him and urged him to join them as a member of the missionary staff. This ultimately happened. Certainly, it was unusual for missionaries to engage a black African, especially at that period in the history of Christianity in Africa.

Problem with Meero's Marriage

Meero first married in 1904 to a fellow person from the coastal part of Kenya, a Taveta lady by name Jessie Mbeele. By then, he was working under McGregor in the Kikuyu Mission Centre in the present day Kiambu County. Shortly, they moved to Weithaga, Murang'a County. As fate would have it, Mbeele did not bear children with Meero. The lack of children from an African perspective was problematic to Meero as Africans attach much value to children.

As such, this must have troubled them greatly, despite their Christian backgrounds – as society viewed childlessness as a punishment from God, probably after staid misdemeanour on the part of the couple.

As Meero and the European missionary team moved from Taveta Centre to Kikuyu (1900); and then from Kikuyu centre to Weithaga (1904); and from Weithaga to Mutira (1909); and from Mutira (1910) to Kabare and Kigari (1910), Jessie Mbeele accompanied the team. In fact, they lived in church compounds, as Meero was always termed as a black missionary who deserved befitting status like those of the European missionaries. To this end, Mbeele stands out distinctly as an unsung heroine of the struggle; a fighter who worked hand-in-hand with her husband to liberate people of central Kenya from stinging superstitions, ignorance, disease and poverty. As her bones lie in unmarked grave in Taveta, Mbeele remains an evangelist of the vast land of central and some eastern parts of Kenya; and whose voice remains suppressed; but boldly written, probably, in God's register. Even though her biological womb did not bear any child to Meero, she however bore more children than the couple could imagine by the mere fact that she supported Meero's ministry during the crucial hour of need, in early 1900s. She thus became the unspoken mother of the unnamed spiritual children who were eventually born after they collectively touched the visited lands. For her efforts, inhabitants of these lands are no longer in darkness; rather education, Christianity, politics, businesses, good tarmac roads and other infrastructures, among other developments, are blossoming well.

While at Kigari in 1910, Jessie Mbeele and Thomas Meero adopted a girl child and as they came building the various centres, they brought her along to Mutira Mission Centre (1911-12). During the great famine of 1915, from Taveta lands of the coastal parts of Kenya, Meero's niece, Edda Tundulu, left for Nairobi via newly constructed Uganda railway (1896 to 1901), to look for her missionary uncle, whom she hoped could provide a relieve to the biting hunger. Upon reaching Kikuyu mission centre, she was surprised that Meero had already left there 'long time ago,' about

ten years before. She was brought to Mutira where Meero had just gotten an Evangelist/Catechist post. Edda, who was born in 1900, was about 15 years old by then. In turn, Thomas and Jessie brought Edda Tundulu as their biological child. And since she was physically small, she was renamed Edda Kanini (Kikuyu for small one) and was educated at Mutira primary school up to standard four. She later married Nderi wa Kamindara in 1927; but later divorced after bearing four children, namely: Gatimu (1928 – 2006), Kaguu 1930, Wanjira 1932 and Wamai 1943 (two sons and two daughters).

After divorce, Edda Tundulu went back to live with her Uncle, Thomas Meero who in turn educated the four children. As they schooled, their surname was Meero, though their biological father was Nderi wa Kamindara. Edda was fluent in Kiswahili and the local *Ndia* accented Kikuyu language and was a committed member of Emmanuel church Mutira. At the time of her death in 1991 she was living in the crowded Kagumo village and was buried in the church compound alongside her uncle Meero. According to Edda's grandson, Joseph Mwangi Gatimu, Edda was a dedicated Christian, a Mother's Union member, and a deep-seated member of the East African Revival Fellowship till her demise at the age of 91, in 1991.

Concerning Meero's adopted child from Kigari mission centre, Embu County, little is known particularly with regard to her whereabouts. However, according to Mwangi Gatimu, Edda's grandson, she was brought up together with Edda as Meero's two children and later left Meero's home when she bitterly differed with Meero's wife, Jessie Mbee. Reports have it that she left to Gichugu Division of Kirinyaga County, in the Kabare pastorate, where she got married during her teenage years.

After staying at Mutira Mission Station for about ten years (1915 to 1925), Mrs Jessie Mbee started complaining that they needed to return to their ancestral land, Taveta, in the coastal region of Kenya. This caused tension, disagreement and general disharmony in the house. Coupled with the fact that they had no child of their own, save for the adopted girl child and Meero's niece, Jessie and Meero's relationship, as husband and wife, deteriorated leading to

Mbeelee's abandonment of her matrimonial home and returned to Taveta where they had originally come from. This marital disharmony complicated Thomas Meero's ministry and led to his isolation by fellow church members. He was thereafter seen as 'a divorced lay minister' who least deserved to work for the church. As a "wayward" brother who had "divorced his wife," Meero's catechism teachings began to work against him, as his former students, turned church elders, felt he no longer had moral authority to stand as a servant in the sacred ministry – where family stability was a supreme requirement. Befogged by these saddening developments, Meero was forced to go to the supreme court of Kenya, Mombasa, in 1932 and file a divorce case in order to terminate his marriage with Jessie Mbeelee. This request was granted in 1933 after Meero successfully convinced the court that their marriage was non-existent, as Jessie had already deserted their matrimonial home, injuring him professionally in the process. He successfully convinced the court that granting the divorce was the only way that could allow him to remarry and thereby get his job as a Catechist/Evangelist back. In 1934, Meero married Milkah Kabuci, a Kikuyu from the Mutira locality with wedding vows taking place at Embu. His best man was Hosea Mbui wa Ndegwa and the best lady was Esther Muthoni Mbui. Like Jessie before her, Milkah Kabuci did not bear any child to Meero. Milkah lived with Meero for 30 years (1934 to 1964). Born in 1905 and died on 5th October 2009, Milkah lived for 104 years.

Meanwhile, when Thomas Meero was isolated and suspended as a church worker for "divorcing" Jessie Mbeelee, in 1930s, he turned to business as well as carpentry and masonry work. But following his re-marriage to Milkah Kabuci, he was re-admitted by the church in 1945—considering his being a co-founder of the church in Mutira. He remained as a church worker till he retired in 1953; by then, he was 70 years old. Being a pioneer teacher, catechist, evangelist, carpenter as well as a mason, it was difficult for the church to abandon him completely, as he remained a resourceful person who could be consulted at times. Throughout his lifetimes, he was seen as pioneer

educator, counsellor, catechist, evangelist, businessman, carpenter, mason and church planter.

Apart from his critical role in founding Mutira primary school, pioneering carpentry, building and construction, and catechism, Meero was also a pioneer businessman. His business included owning a Posho Mill, trade in wattle bark (*magoko*) - a business he taught Johana Njumbi. He was also a shop keeper. Rev. Canon John Mararo recalls seeing the inscription in his business house: “THOMAS NELSON MEERO & CO.” in a building that stands to date, opposite Karigu-ini Restaurant in Kagumo Town.

According to Rev. Symon Kigundu, who was the pastor to his wife, Milkah Kabuci till she died in 2009, his family was left in abject poverty. Once Meero died, it was difficult to trace his scattered property; for he could have partnered with dishonest associates.³ When Milkah Kabuci Meero died in October 2009, the new Kamuiru parish, which was once an out-station of Mutira parish was in a crisis as the church elders, did not know where to bury her body. For in African cultural traditions, a wife of such a great maker of history could not be buried in any cemetery or in any unmarked grave; yet Meero had not left any known piece of land. In Kigundu’s view, Meero lacked people to connect him to the local clan (*Agaciku*) where he could have been ritually born into the community, through a clan of a particular family hence accessing a piece of land. This is possible for culture allows a non-member of Kikuyu Nation certain rights where one can, through slaughtering a ceremonial Goat, access land after being “born”; hence after traditional adoption become a part of the community. Especially for outstanding characters like Meero, this common practice would have been relatively easy, particularly in those days. This begs the question on why Meero did not do it. Did he trust Jesus too blindly that he felt that materials resources in form of land were unnecessary, as Jesus satisfies in every

³Interview with Rev. Symon Kigundu, Gathuthi-ini, at Canon Ngoro’s compound, October 27, 2010.

circumstance? Or was it that he was so steeped in white missionary Christianity that he did not perceive this “pagan ritual” important?

The latter could be the case for Meero’s approach to Christianity appears largely conservative, as he chose to ignore African culture that would have allowed him polygamy in matters regarding his childless marriage. He however had the resolve to go to court and then re-married almost immediately after the court granted him divorce. He was also liberal as evidenced by the fact that despite being a strict Anglican, Meero partnered in business with practising Roman Catholics like Munene Kibuga the proprietor of Karigu-ini Restaurant at Kagumo Town with who they jointly owned a Posho (maize) Mill and engaged in *Magoko* (wattle-bark) business – which eventually failed at a certain stage.⁴

Of interest to note is that when Meero died in 1960s, his grandson, Joseph Mwangi Gatimu, took care of his wife Milkah Kabuci, at Kagumo village, till she died on 5th October 2009 at 104 years old and was buried on 12th October 2009 near the office of Mutira parish. As we remember one hundred years of Mutira Anglican Christianity, various concerns regarding the pioneer African leader still linger on: did Meero die without leaving a will that bequeathed property to his family? Was he a secretive man who did not involve his family in his businesses pursuits; or as is widely rumoured, were his properties seized by his business partners upon his death? In addition, why wasn’t he adopted among Kikuyu clans and thereby got a piece of clan land? Or why didn’t he buy a piece of land in the locality - despite land being relatively cheap then?

Going through his preserved diaries, one notices that Meero was a disciplined operator; who wrote everything he planned to do on a daily basis. He respected his pledges and stuck to his promises. He was politically integrated and would liaise with Rev. Butcher to influence some civic policies during Chief Njega wa Gioko’s reign. Issues that Meero would take to Njega wa Gioko for consideration

⁴Interview with Rev. Symon Kigundu, Gathuthi-ini, at Canon Ngoro’s compound, October 27, 2010.

and sought decisive action included: land disputes, Mau Mau crisis, social conflicts among others. As an advisor to Chief Njega wa Gioko, Meero pleaded with him to stop European missionaries from settling in Mwea Division of Kirinyaga County for he felt that Mwea would be better left as a grazing land and not as a settlement farm. Another case is where he fought hard to bring Kagumo Town to its present geographical location. Initially, Chief Ndegwa wa Kimere wanted to retain the Town at Kangware, near Mununga Tea Factory, but Meero went in 1933 to petition to the paramount chief, Njega wa Gioko so that Kagumo Town could be brought to the present site. His reasoning was that the main road to Kerugoya, Karatina and Nyeri towns passes through the present site. And as a businessman-cum evangelist, he projected that a thriving business would do well if the three neighbouring towns were easily connected through the road transport network. And even though Chief Ndegwa Kimere opposed it, Meero carried the day when chief Njega sent Meero to sub-chief Kagai – ordered him to implement the proposal with the urgency it deserved. Today, Kagumo Town is loosely called Gwa Kagai, meaning Kagai's place because Kagai, and not Meero, brought it to its present site. In other words, even if Kagai implemented Njega's order, there were other people who were working behind the scene. Inarguably, though not recognised, Thomas Meero is one such person.

Meero's Death

Thomas Mero finally succumbed to death on 15th of November 1964 and was laid to rest on the Mutira church Compound in a grave below the Maternity (Dispensary) with Rev. J. Muturi conducted the ceremony. According to Rev. Canon John Mararo, who attended his burial, Meero remained a respected man in the locality.⁵ As he walked through the neighbouring Kagumo Township, locals loosely called him, "Meero wa Mission" (Meero of the Mission). Although

⁵Interview with Rev Canon John Mararo, Cool Breeze Hotel – Mombasa, November 11, 2010.

Meero had problems with his marriage, the church, which he founded, honoured and gave him a hero's burial within the church compound. Ordinarily, a Christian who gets involved in court battles over failed marriage would be seen as wayward or a backslider whose "sins cannot be forgiven" and thus ineligible for such honour. He or she may not receive Christian rites upon his death; but in Meero's case, this was different for he had immensely contributed in the re-birth of the society, particularly being a black missionary. Certainly, as Mutira mission marks its first centenary (1912-2012), history would be incomplete without including his name for religio-social growth of the locality is heavily associated with Thomas Meero.

Elijah Kimani Kiongo (1875 – 1985)

Elijah Kimani Kiongo belongs to the category of outstanding lay persons who played a critical role in reshaping our society in the light of the Gospel of Christ, as it was propounded by the missionaries. He was born in 1875 at Kanyokora in Mwerua location of Kirinyaga West District, Kirinyaga County. In his early life, he served his father as a herd's boy, particularly during his adolescence. In complying with rituals and Kikuyu rites of passage, he underwent traditional circumcision so as to enter into manhood. In turn, he was expected to graduate into a community warrior. It also allowed a man to undertake adult assignments such as marriage. To do this, one had to undergo several youthful stages before he qualified to be responsible and hence be the head of a family. These stages included ability for a man or his family to afford a bride price which comprised of beer, goats, sheep and cows. Subsequently, Kimani married in 1912 under Kikuyu customary law.

Sometime during the First World War (1914 to 1919), Kimani, served the army as the person in charge of cleaning, ironing clothes and as a cook. This made him to visit various places in Eastern Africa such as Entebbe, Bukoba, Mwanza, Mogadishu, Tabora, and Pemba among others. Around the same time (1918 to 1919), he attended Mutira Primary school and received his pupilage under Canon H. E. Butcher. Furthermore, in his youthful days, Kimani

went to live in the Coastal parts of Kenya (1918 to 1920), Mombasa in particular. Here, he got an early exposure on 'modern' living as the coastal parts had been evangelized much earlier than the central parts of Kenya where he hailed from. This early exposure eventually paid dividends later. At Mombasa where he worked for a living, he attended baptismal classes. Upon his return to Central Kenya, he was baptized and confirmed. He later returned to school and attended Kahuhia Normal School in January to May 1924. Kahuhia is in the present day Murang'a County.

In 1919, Elijah Kimani with other people such as Harun Maina, Reuben Kimotho, Ayub Munyi, Petero Kirangi, and Samuel Mburu 'founded' Kiburu Anglican Church, an out-station of Mutira parish. They also built their houses near St. John's Kiburu Church and eventually settled there. And as they worked hard to build the church, Chief Mbuimwe assisted in its construction by providing bamboo materials from the forest. As fate would have it, the church was finally built of mud walls and was thatched with banana fibre.

Concerning his ecclesiastical developments, Elijah Kimani Kiongo was baptised in 1921 at Kabare Mission Centre by Rev. Rampley. He was later confirmed in 1922 at Weithaga Centre, in the current day – Murang'a County, by Bishop Heywood. As he gained experience in ecclesiastical duties, Kiongo became a member of Mutira Pastorate and remained there for many years. Kimani taught Kiburu Primary School from 1922 to 1931. He had a brief break from his teaching duties in 1927 when he attended Jeans School for one month. As one of the few 'educated' Africans of his life time, he was sponsored by CMS Missionaries as a member of the Native Tribunal Court from 1931 to 1963 to represent the interests of the Church. Additionally, Kimani is remembered as the first chairman and the founder of Kiburu Secondary School Who also offered his 15 acres land title to guarantee Bank money for school running. Again, he fully and willingly participated in constituting the present day Kiburu Primary School which shifted from the area that is now occupied by the Secondary School. In addition, he surrendered his plot of land for the proposed construction of a school, which was

certainly his brainchild. In turn, such gestures encouraged other people to follow suit and offer their plots of land for the construction of school and other developments in the area. Today, Kiburu Township, as it stands today, 2011, is greatly indebted to his pioneering and dedicated efforts.

During his tenure as a Court Elder (the president) in Embu and Kerugoya, he assisted in the establishment of churches. In particular, St. Thomas Cathedral in Kerugoya Town and St Paul's Embu are indebted to him, as he worked hard to see to it that his Anglican church got a plot to extend its mission work. A few months before his earthly life came to a close; he directed and introduced the Church Bell Project at Kiburu Church. He also offered a plot where Ndigaru out-station Church of Kiburu parish was built. He eventually died a peaceful death in bed at his house in Riakiania Township at around 5 p. m. on January 9, 1985 – after living for one hundred and ten years. He was buried in the church compound, which neighbours Kiburu secondary school. As a then form three student at the neighbouring Kiburu secondary school, at the time of his burial, I can remember how his death sparked unprecedented mourning which was unique in every sense of the word. First, it was viewed as the death of the father of the locality, founder of the school and the church; hence none of our teachers was keen to be seen to be working normally when the society was mourning the 'king' and hence school programmes were interrupted for more than a week. In addition, some of his grand children (Wambui Kiringa, Kariuki Ndegwah and Leah Ndegwa among others) were studying with the rest of us in the school, hence it was natural that the school had to join them in mourning their grand parent. Certainly, Elijah Kimani Kiongo has a huge contribution in the painful birth of African Christianity, generally in the old Mutira pastorate and specifically in Kiburu.

Lay Canon James Stanley Mathenge (1935 -)

Born in 1935, Lay Canon James Stanley Mathenge got his early education in Mutira (Lower) Primary School (1946 – 1950); Government African School Kangaru (Upper Primary) (1951 –

1953); and Alliance High School, Kikuyu (1954 – 1957) for his secondary school education. For his undergraduate education, Mathenge got his B. A. (London) at Makerere University College (a constituent College of London University) (1958 – 1962) where he specialized in Mathematics, English, Geography and Sociology. He finally majored in Mathematics & Sociology. Furthermore, Mathenge joined Kenya Institute of Administration in 1962 where he underwent a District Officer's (DO) Administration Course; undertook Senior Management Course (KIA) in 1967, He also pursued post graduate training in Development Management at Sussex University, UK, in 1966 and Economics at London University, 1974/75. Mathenge has been married to Faith since 1962. Together, they are blessed with two boys and three daughters. Additionally, he is a grandfather of three children.

With regard, to his work experience, Mathenge left the University and immediately joined the government as a District Officer in 1962 and rose through the ranks, to Permanent Secretary in the Office of the President. Between 1962 and 1990 when he retired, he was Deputy Permanent Secretary, Financial Secretary and Director of External Resources in the Ministry of Finance; Permanent Secretary in Ministries of Water Development (1978 – 79), Agriculture (1979 – 80), and Chairman of Public Service Commission (1986 – 90). He retired from the Civil Service in 1990 and has since then concentrated on farming, business, socio-ecclesial and educational matters. Certainly, he's great asset to the church and society.

JS as he is commonly known has been Vice-Chairman of the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Kirinyaga since 1991 to the present moment. The position comes second after that of the Bishop, as Synod is the most powerful decision making organ of the Anglican Church. He also serves as the Governor of the Church Commissioners of Kenya, a body that deals with pension and retirements benefit for all church workers in Kenya. He is the Chairman of Provincial Institutions Board; ACK Guest House, Nairobi; and Christian Community Services (CCS) of Dioceses of Mt. Kenya East. By 2011,

he was a member of the Provincial Synod, and Standing Committee of the Provincial Synod; and Kirinyaga Synods' and Standing Committee and Finance Committee. At the high echelon of the Anglican Church in Nairobi, Mathenge was, by 2011, the chairman of the Provincial Institutions and Investment committee

With regard to honours and awards, Mathenge has been acknowledged in Kenya and beyond. The honours include: ACK Provincial Award of the Order of St. Barnabas; M.B.S. by the Kenya Government for meritorious service; B.P. Fellow for service to youth and humanity through Scouting; Lion badge for distinguished service to scouting in Kenya; Elephant Badge for distinguished service to scouting in Africa (highest award); and a Who is Who in the Commonwealth, among others.

Concerning Board membership, Mathenge has been a member of the following Boards in Kenya and beyond. That is, The Central Bank of Kenya; The National and Grindlays Bank; The Kenya Commercial Bank; The Kenya Oil Refineries Ltd; The Nzoia Sugar Company; and The Sony Sugar Company. He is also the chairman of various Boards of Governors of: Kabare Girls High School (1978 – 2005); Kirinyaga Technical Institute (KTI) (1978 – 2006); and is also a member and Secretary of Trustees for Kirinyaga Technical Institute (KTI) – an institution which is set to be a constituent University College of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT).

Additionally, he has also served as the World Scouts Movement (BP Fellow); Member of the World Scout Committee; Chairman of Africa Scout Committee; Executive member of Kenya Scout's Association; Trustee of Kenya Scout Association; The Kenya Ear Foundation; Chairman of Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya (The FPEAK); KIT – Kenya Finance Trust (to date); Wednesday Breakfast Prayer Group – weekly morning prayers and ministry of reaching top executives in the public and private sector for Christ; and the Chairman of Kenya Freedom From Hunger Council.

Certainly, Mathenge is a leading pillar in the old Mutira pastorate, a pioneer in various spheres of life. He is loosely referred to as Senior Citizen for his outstanding role in the society. As a matter of fact, Mathenge has handled disputes in the church as a skilful mediator; assists sons and daughters to acquire jobs; presided various fundraising projects to pay outstanding medical bills, pay school fees for less privileged children, for building schools and hospitals, donating pieces of land for church construction, consoling the bereaved and has generally touched masses of people in diverse ways. As Mutira Anglican mission commemorates one hundred years of its existence, Mathenge, no doubt symbolises hope for masses of people who walk through the valley of the shadow of death. At one stage (1980s), he was widely considered for political office only to turn it down when he reminded his admirers that his philanthropic role was not meant to make political mileage; rather, he is a product of the society hence, he needed no human reward.

A down to earth personality, Mathenge is living legend to some. As we grew up in 1980, I remember teachers urging us to excel in Mathematics like Mathenge who was the best in the then Central Province in Mathematics during the Common Entrance at Mutira primary school in 1950s. As a legend in Mathematics, his record was still remembered 40 years after, as most people could not break the record that he set. It is this record that made him proceed to the prestigious Government African School Kangaru (Upper Primary) in 1951 – 1953. As noted earlier, his hard work took him to Makerere University College. By then, Makerere was a constituent College of London University.

Early Graduates in Kirinyaga

At Makerere, Mathenge studied with other pioneer academics in the locality; that is, the sons and daughters of the old Mutira pastorate such as Robert Ndegwa, Gerald Mugera, Madam Wanjiku Kabuitu, John Ngata Kariuki, Philip Ndegwa, Daniel Muriithi, Murage Kagunga, John Matere Keriri, and Josphat Mutugi among others. Of interest to note is that while Mathenge specialized in Mathematics,

Matere specialised in Economics and political science; Philip Ndegwa, from Kiini, in Economics; Josphat Mutugi, also from Kiini south of Mutira, became the first African Labour Commissioner in Kenya after independence, Daniel Muriithi, who came from Kerugoya area, became a leading Veterinary Doctor; while Gerald Mugera, another Veterinary Doctor, from Karaini near Mutira went on to become the first person in the locality to become a University Professor. However the first person in the old Mutira pastorate to be awarded a University degree is the late Robert Ndegwa who hailed from Kagio area, Mwirua location of Ndia Division. This was certainly a climactic moment for the Ndia people and the entire Embu District of the late 1950s, as none had been awarded such a high academic honour in the entire District. By then Embu District comprised of the present day Embu and Kirinyaga Counties. He was a specialist in mathematics. Thus, the history of Mutira pastorate cannot be complete without mentioning the pioneer group of educated people, some of whom we could not trace during our researches.

Early Professionals with Mutira Roots

As Mutira marks its first centenary celebration (1912 to 2012), it is critical to appreciate that there are many unsung heroes and heroines of early Christianity who may never get footnoted anywhere. Among them is Karingo a woman who accepted Christianity immediately in its earliest stages and got her baptismal name, Tabitha, at baptism when water was sprinkled on her. According to researches, Tabitha who had lost her husband, Mururia, during her prime age rejected to be inherited as African culture demanded that a young widowed woman be inherited by close relatives. To this end, Mururia's⁶ brothers tried to inherit her to no avail as her Christian ethics dictated otherwise. She left her homestead and settled at Mutira Mission Centre so as to seek refuge with missionaries who were opposed to certain cultures and also to strengthen her Christian faith. She joined

⁶Mururia's other names were Murage and Kiragu. In view of this, children named after him are given any of the three names.

the mission around 1915 after refusing *guthambio* - literally meaning “being washed” or simply wife inheritance. For this, she was greatly isolated by the locality for being a traitor. How can she betray our life long traditions that have existed from time immemorial? Does she want to behave like Europeans? They would wonder.⁷

Tabitha Karingo and Mururia (also called Kiragu) got five children. That is, Wairangi (the first born),⁸ Wanduma,⁹ Nathan, Ishmael Gaite and Waruguru. With regard to her pedigree, Tabitha had been exchanged from Murang’a (*metumi*) during the great famine that had hit the people. Like the biblical Joseph, Karingo was exchanged by her brothers for food, when she was still young. As she was running away from some repressive cultural practices, she found other people who had similar view of life. Among them is one, Kinyua, who was later nicknamed Kamoni after he refused to have his ear pierced, as culture dictated and thereby became another ‘traitor.’ As a result, Kamoni, as he later became, went and build near the church so that he could be protected from cultural chauvinists. In turn, the word *kamoni* comes from the suffix *moni*, the lower part of the ear, which was culturally pierced. Henceforth Kinyua would loosely be called wakamoni, that is, one whose ears were not pierced. As the saying goes, ‘birds of the same feather fly together,’ Kamoni had a good working harmony with Tabitha - as both had converted to Christianity during the turbulent days of cultural repression and stringency. As fate would have it, Kamoni later married Tabitha’s second born; and together, they bore Joshat

⁷Interview with Phillip Mwangi Gaite at his Kagumo trading house, on 18th November 2010.

⁸Wairangi’s daughter, Esther Karingo, got married to Odham Kaniaru. She bore Wairangi Kaniaru, Elsaphan Muriithi (also Gichira) among others.

⁹Wanduma, daughter of Kiragu was the mother to Joshat Gathogo, Joyce Wakirunda and Leonard Kiragu.

Gathogo (1918),¹⁰ Joyce Wakirunda (1923) w/o Laban Rukenya and Leonard Kiragu (1928). Curiously, Kamoni's wife did not convert to Christianity. She was only baptised in 1970s after the entire "world" turned Christian; hence she accepted Christianity on rational grounds and 'mourned' rather than rejoiced - as she got baptised! By then Kamoni had died over thirty years before. Or could she have gotten convicted by Kamoni's ancestral spirits? Why reject Christianity for so many years only to throw the towel at the eleventh hour? Is it scriptural? Tabitha, who nurtured his grandson – Josphat Gathogo – into Christianity, taught him to accept virtues of tolerance, God-fearing, patience among other Christian virtues, died when she was well over 100 years old. In other words, Tabitha Karingo, who first lost her eye sight, died of old age.

By 1920, missionaries at Mutira had begun to prepare professionals who were to lead in the holistic growth of society. According to Philip Mwangi Gaite, the professions that were first introduced by European missionaries in the Mutira pastorate were: masonry, teaching, and nursing.¹¹ I shall attempt to highlight each of them:

a). Early Masonry/Contractor Profession

The first contractor in Mutira locality was Thomas Meero, also called Toma Bundi, who was a great carpenter though he also did lots of masonry work. At first, Meero was the only African who was building with Europeans. In particular, the first buildings for Mutira church and the primary school were built by Meero and the Europeans, as

¹⁰Josphat Gathogo wa Kamoni wa Gathogo wa Kinyingi wa Ithimbwi, was born around 1918, as the first born of Wanduma (d/o Kiragu-Mururia) and Kamoni wa Gathogo. In turn, Kamoni had a brother who was called Kaara. Although Kaara was the elder brother, he followed Kamoni and settled near Mutira Anglican mission; and in turn, he bore Reuben Kinyua (one of the pioneer nurses), Richard Mbogo and Ngando Kaara.

¹¹Interview with Phillip Mwangi Gaite at his Kagumo trading house, on 18th November 2010.

no African then was trained as a professional builder. Later on, Meero was joined by Marko Kangi who assisted him. Later other masonries/contractors emerged such as Justus Ngari wa Riua, Paulo wa Warui and Ishmael Gaite. According to Charles Makumi, they used to train at Murang'a and Mathari, Nyeri.¹²

Josphat Gathogo (1918 – 78) is categorised in the second group of masonry/contractor to appear in Mutira pastorate and Kirinyaga County in general. As the idea of building and construction gained momentum, the second group found themselves more engaged than those who trained before them. Josphat was first inspired by his uncle, Ishmael Gaite (1904-1966), who was in the first group. While Ishmael trained as a masonry/contractor in early 1930s, Josphat went to train in late 1930s. To some, Gaite is the pioneer masonry/contractor around Mutira mission centre. Dissimilar to Makumi's view, Kiragu Kamoni, Gaite's nephew, explained that Gaite was trained in NTD Kabete and not Mathari or Murang'a. Gaite later left the construction work to pioneer as a public health technician. He also pioneered as the first principal of Kaitheri village polytechnic – during the emergency period (1950s).

After Josphat Gathogo sat for his Common Entrance Certificate at Mutira primary school, he proceeded to NTD Kabete for the course after Ishmael convinced him to take it as his profession, considering that the country was moving towards modern buildings and general reconstruction. And since, they thought construction work was better paying, those days, they found it appropriate to join it. Makumi avers that he started hearing about Gathogo as a hardworking contractor before the *Mau-Mau* war broke out (before 1950). His son Julius Mutugi recalls one day in 1977 when he accompanied his father to splash water in an ongoing construction work which Josphat was contracted to build. At one stage, a sizeable stone hit him as he climbed through the scaffoldings. As he cascaded downwards and subsequently nursed himself with the medicines he had kept in his

¹²Interview with Mzee Charles Makumi on 21st November 2010, at his Kariko house, near Mutira mission centre. Makumi wa born in 1925.

bag (*Detto*), his class three son started crying. Afterwards, the old man addressed him:

“Why have you been crying uncontrollably?” Josphat asked. “I have been waiting for you to stop so that you can tell me why.” He went on. “I cried because I saw the stone hitting you and wondered why a stone could, of all things, choose to hit and possibly kill my father.” Julius replied. “That then shouldn’t have made you cry because these are professional hazards – for every profession has got its share of problems.” Josphat replied. “But then I cannot choose a masonry/contractor profession. It is deadly, blood shedding and dusty” Julius told his father. Appearing irritated, Josphat picked a piece of Coffee branch from the nearby Coffee farm and gave a long and emotionally charged defence to his last born son: “No, not at all! This Masonry/contractor profession is as good or as bad as any other. No profession is free from teething problems. But if you choose to stay at home, so as to avoid problems, what shall you eat?” He went on. “You see, I only bring the bread you eat – only when I go out to make use of the profession that I was trained by my school teacher at NTD Kabete. Outside that how can I operate? How can I get my bread without it?”

“But there are other professions, where you do not require carrying heavy stones, mixing dusty sand, concrete and cement ... you do not need a wheel barrow to do some work...” Julius protested. “But what would you want to be when you grow up?” Josphat asked the stubborn boy. “I can be a teacher like Mwalimu Jeffitha Karimurio, a doctor, an office clerk among others and be smartly dressed in a tie always.” Julius replied as Josphat got somewhat irritated.

“You see this small branch of Coffee tree, which everyone is proud of as a cash crop in Kenya? Can you see how it has overbearing? Can you see...?” Josphat asked. “Yes, I can see.” Julius replied. “If the Whiteman in Europe and other places refuses to purchase our coffee [in Africa], where can one go? Whom can you turn to? What can you eat? How can you educate children?” Josphat wondered. “Can he/she refuse to buy coffee and impoverish people?” Julius posed. “If the European colonised us till 1963, where we were hewers of wood and drawers of water, like the children of

Israel when they were in Egypt, why then should one think that the European will continue buying Kenya's coffee? The buyer can decide to drink Cocoa or just hot water.... You cannot force him or her to buy your products." Josphat explained to the inquisitive and increasingly scared son.

"What then should we do to address such an eventuality?" Julius posed. "Everyone must take school education seriously; listen to your teachers keenly, obey them and let them help you have a course (referring to his profession) like mine or whichever you want to do. As for mine, I studied in NTD Kabete and I am proud of it. When I see a tall building that I have built, though some difficult people are reluctant to pay, I feel happy – as I will have done God's will. I am always happy because I have made my contribution in my small way. Even if stones, occasionally hit me, injure me, I thank God that I am still able to continue... which one will you choose when you grow up? Did I hear you say it? Josphat asked.

As I told you, I will go for that which has more money, no dust, no denial of salary by selfish owners of the houses such as those which you build... I will get a better one." Julius said stubbornly. "Ok then, you will tell me. But remember, every profession has its own challenges. Ok then, let's go home, I am healed, there is no more blood oozing from my body. You will tell me tomorrow the profession you would choose for your future career..." Josphat concluded, as he took the bicycle which Julius liked to ride as constructions went on.

The following afternoon Julius did not join his father in his working places as he used to do after morning sessions in school, as class one, two and three did not usually have afternoon lessons. Rather than look for his father, he would go to the sitting room to read, drawing Mathematical tables and other school activities. As Josphat realised that his son was no longer following him in the afternoon; rather, his son was always reading, he was very happy. He went all over the home compound telling people how the 'young man' is managing his time well, reading books, doing mathematical exercises and so forth. As he talked from outside the house, Julius could hear how he was being appreciated and had his morale boosted; hence

put more effort from that time henceforth. He never followed his father to see his ongoing construction works or follow him with intent of getting a chance to ride his long bicycle, which also kept on injuring the short and small sized Julius, particularly whenever he fell in the course of riding it.

A year after the so-called “farewell speech” to his son (early 1977), Josphat Gathogo was hit by a man, only described as a *Luoman*. Reportedly, the man was working at Munene wa Kibuga’s Bar, later renamed Karigu-ini Restaurant. As Josphat reached Rundu River near Kagumo Town, the Luo man ambushed him and in a twinkle of an eye, he had knocked him and left deeply convinced that Josphat was dead. After hours of unconsciousness, Josphat crawled through to his shop at Kagumo Town. Interestingly, the minute he reached there, he found Julius who was the only member of his family present. As he struggled to recognise Julius, the young man noted that something fishy had taken place. He moved all over calling relatives such as his Uncle, Leonard Kiragu, who eventually took him to the hospital. Even though he survived death, he was never the same; as he remained an ailing man till his death in July 1978. In other words, he stayed for a few months and then died.

Initially, attempts to “discipline” the Luo man were thwarted by invisible and powerful forces that cannot be explained to date. Initially, they floated the rumour that Josphat’s conflict with the man was a result of a debt that he had incurred from his shop but was unwilling to pay. It was also rumoured that the Luo man was influenced by alcohol and drugs. As one hundred years of Missionary enlightenment is celebrated in Mutira, one may still pose a few questions regarding the killing of one of the leading pioneers in the construction industry: Was the Luo man an assassin for hire? Why wasn’t he arrested? Who protected him from prosecution? Did Josphat have a premonition of his impending death as he delivered his “farewell speech” to his son; and does that have any lesson for modern parents? How far should we go when urging our children to choose their professional careers? In the case of Julius and Josphat, they

never agreed on which profession was best for Julius. As a result, Julius settled as a University Don, some years later.

Prior to the declaration of State of Emergency, Josphat Gathogo and Paulo wa Warui were working as builders/contractors at Kariobangi, Nairobi. From their base at Kariobangi, they would travel to various parts of Nairobi to do construction work, especially building houses for Indians who were very active economically. It is only in 1973 when Makumi joined Gathogo to build Mutira Farmers Society buildings after a contract was given to him (Josphat). Others who worked in this project included Gatithi Mbunya. Again, during the era of Rev. Johana Muturi as the Vicar of Mutira pastorate, Josphat Gathogo and Charles Makumi were contracted to build two classes of Mutira primary school, 1973. By then, the headmaster was Mr. Eliud Macuki. Other public buildings that Josphat was contracted to start includes the current St. Thomas Cathedral, Kerugoya in 1976; Kiarugu primary; part of Kamuiru primary; some Kibingo, Kianyaga, Kerugoya, Baricho, and Kagumo shops among others; some classes in Mutitu and Getuya primary schools, among others. Today in 2011, masonry as a profession is heavily flooded in the so-called old Mutira pastorate to an extent that one can be tempted to think that it was the way it is from the very beginning; yet it only had a handful of people before 1980.

b). Early Medical Professionals

Another critical profession that was introduced by the European missionaries is the medical practice; that is, training of nurses and laboratory technicians. As the missionaries tried to get people out traditional medicine – which they deemed satanic and inferior, they encouraged some locals to take interests in western medicine and the medical practice in general. To this end, Zachariah wa Gakure, the father to Mathayo Gakure, became the first African medical practitioner, after he was trained as a nurse. The second African medical practitioner in the old Mutira pastorate is Mzee Ezekiah. He came from Mutitu area (commonly known as Kiawaruguru).

Before 1950s, his fathers' family was residing near Kagumo Coffee factory, about 600 metres from Mutira mission centre. The third African medical practitioner in Mutira is Reuben Kinyua Kaara. For Reuben, as he was popularly called, he was more educated than Zachariah and Ezekiah.

According to his first born son, Wilson Murimi, Reuben had attended various schools before he settled on medical profession. That is, Mutira primary school, Kagumo-Nyeri, and NTD Kabete where he trained as a nurse.¹³ He later went to work at Kerugoya hospital, around 1930. By then, Kerugoya hospital was bigger than Embu hospital. In addition, Kerugoya had carrot and vegetable factory during the Second World War (1939-45). Unlike Embu town, Kerugoya had other industries; plus plenty of food. The carrots and vegetable factory was built within the compound that is now occupied by the District Commissioner. While the current building which hosts Kerugoya police headquarters was the main office for the carrot and vegetable factory. Additionally, Kerugoya had a heavy European presence.

When Reuben Kinyua (1912-1953) went to work in Kerugoya Town in 1930s, he first learnt to use the microscope hence his interest in being a laboratory technician began. It is from there that he went to NTD Kabete to study. Upon his successful completion of studies at Kabete, Reuben returned to Mutira. It is from there that he easily got employed by the missionaries as a laboratory technician. He also doubled as a nurse. During his stay at Mutira mission (1930s to early 1950s), he was largely seen as hospitable and friendly. His being hospitable is seen in the fact that he paid for the education of his cousin, Kiragu Kamoni, and his younger brother Ngando Kaara by paying their school fees. He also assisted many other people whose names could not be established. As a counsellor, he would invite the

¹³Interview with Wilson Murimi Reuben, at my Mutira house, on 21st November 2010.

¹⁴Rev Canon John Mararo the administrative secretary of Kirinyaga Diocese is named after this traditional circumciser.

initiates, of African traditional circumcision under Mzee Mararo,¹⁴ in Mutira dispensary – and administered modern medicine for ‘quick recovery.’ In short, he would see them through the recovery process. His assistants included: Mikah wa Karingi, and Peter Wamagunya among others. He also trained Cyrus Wamicii popularly called Ciira wa Paulo Kangi – as a nurse. Reuben’s age mate, Isabella Wanjiku Githaiga d/o Chief Ndegwa Kimere recalls that Reuben encouraged people to use modern medicine, attend the dispensary, rather than relying on traditional herbs only.¹⁵

Characteristically, Reuben was always bitter with the age-mates of his father who did not take their children to school. To demonstrate the seriousness of the matter, he would visit them and complain bitterly while urging them to see the need for formal education. And since he was feared, most of the elders would accept the idea of modern education and ultimately take children to school, and to the local church. In particular, Nguri Mbiti used to admit that were it not for the fact that Ruben urged his grandfather, Mbiti wa Kaburi, to educate him, he could not have gone to school. Similarly, Kangi Kaburi is beholden to Reuben Kinyua for his education.

In 1934, Reuben married Gladys Mukiri d/o Gacibiri Njiru at the District Commissioners’ office, Embu. And due to his professional dexterity, the missionaries did not reject him on account that he had not conducted his holy matrimony in the church. Gladys and Reuben bore two children, namely: Rose Muthoni, 1939 and Wilson Murimi, 1942. Sadly, Gladys died in early 1944 after a sudden illness. Reuben remarried Margaret Wakanugu Ngaire around 1945. With Margaret, Reuben bore Edith Wangu w/o Hon James Kibicho and Elsaphan Muriuki among others.

During the *Mau-Mau* insurgency (1950s), Mutira pastorate and the entire Kikuyu Nation was split in the middle as brothers, relatives and neighbours held one another with suspicion. Some fought; some killed and others migrated to other places. In particular, people were

¹⁵Interview with Isabella Wanjiku Githaiga, at her Kandegwa home, Muragara, 6 kilometres from the mission centre.

divided along pro and antigovernment. Reuben Kinyua was classed as pro-colonial government hence a traitor of the African course for self determination and freedom. Why? First, Reuben was employed by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), a UK religious body, who were seen as pro-government. Ironically, those who were injured during the war of independence were nursed by him – even when they were escorted by the Europeans. Second, he had previously refused to take the *Mau-Mau* oath. His rejection of the oath, conducted in 1940s, was on the basis that “Africans need independence and not the oath” and that “the way to independence was not necessarily violence.” Third, Isabella Wanjiku adds another dimension to Reuben’s killing - as the desire by radical *Mau-Mau* operators’ to illicitly acquire free medicines so as to take them to the forest. According to her, Reuben would say no to such schemes, “let whoever wants to be treated come to the dispensary. I will treat him or her. You cannot administer medicine unprofessionally, they can equally kill.” Reuben could tell whoever wanted free medicines. Fourth, as a Christian, he did not see the need for another oath as Jesus death; crucifixion and resurrection was “enough universal oath.” How can you “swear to shed blood, even if it is for a just cause, when Jesus did it for all humanity?” he would wonder, as he spoke to close confidants. Reuben’s approach to the ongoing contention was in working harmony with that of Chief Stephen Ngigi Machere who belonged to the group that held the view that rather than fight (*Mau-Mau* versus government) “lets dialogue.” In their meetings, Dauti Kamwana, Chief Waruhiu of the present day Kiambu County and Jomo Kenyatta among others would be in attendance. In his confessions to Wilson Murimi Reuben, in 1983, Ngigi Machere had taken the Kenya African Union (KAU) political party oath but not the *Mau-Mau* oath. Ngigi was Reuben’s age mate; and were close friends at the time of Reuben’s death.

For the ‘sin’ of not taking the oath, he became a targeted man. On the other hand, if he took the *Mau-Mau* oath, he could have been detained by the colonial authorities; and hence, people in the locality would lack somebody to nurse them up. He thus lived under this

psychologically torturing dilemma till he was free at last. Unfortunately, non-partakers of the oath were constantly beheaded by gangs of freedom fighters that employed guerrilla tactics in their bid to advance their course. But for Reuben's case, he was useful to both sides, as he treated pro and antigovernment groups. Should he meet the same fate with others who rejected the oath hence beheaded? Reportedly, as Reuben remained a wanted man, the *Mau-Mau* operators were also torn in the middle. Should we spare him or kill him? They wondered. A tiny extremist group insisted that the die for Reuben was cast.

In 1953, one group of *Mau-Mau*, the radicals, broke into Mutira church, stole church records, stole medicines in the dispensary and then went to Reuben Kinyua's home; got him forcefully out of the house in full glare of the traumatised family; conducted a kangaroo court by interrogating him and subsequently sentenced him to death. The death sentence was executed with a barrel of the gun. After shooting him dead, they slashed him across the stomach.

Meanwhile, a note was left at Mutira dispensary by one, General J. Christo, claiming that he had committed the murder. And when the *Mau-Mau* moderates learnt that Reuben had been killed, they alerted the radicals to look for another forest to operate from, as they would equally be killed. This forced the radicals to flee towards Embu; but when they reached Njuki-ini forest, while armed with Mutira church records, two were killed by the Government Security Guards (commonly known as Home Guards) and the records were recovered. One prized item that was never recovered however was the microscope. General J. Christo, who had left a note at Reuben's murder scene was finally killed at Kiamugo near Reuben Kinyua's home in the same year, 1953; as he wandered while looking for a place to hide away from the authorities.

Following Reuben Kinyua's murder, people around Mutira mission centre got shocked and scared. They left en-mass to settle at Mutitu Chief's camp where security had been thoroughly beefed up. The area was in great shock because Reuben was a great pillar whose death could not be imagined. Isabella Wanjiku d/o Chief Ndegwa

Kimere recalls that a strong sense of loss engulfed the larger part of Ndia and Kirinyaga in general. Later, people became very sick as most hospitals were destroyed, abandoned without Reuben, as “the world came into a standstill.”¹⁶ Again, business at the nearby Kagumo Market came to a standstill; as the government confiscated people’s properties in its bid to impoverish the ‘naughty people’ – who had killed an outstanding professional. Some of the confiscated items included cattle and were taken to Ndomba, Ahiti, in Kutus Town. This confiscation was meant to weaken the *Mau-Mau* support. Additionally, the government reinforced its security, sending people into concentration camps such as Kabonge. Further, the military was stationed and reinforced at Kabonge and Kamuruana, West and North of Mutira mission centre. Kagumo Town remained a ghost town where only the home guards could be seen patrolling around. Certainly, it was a time of war.

During the war, most churches, schools and dispensaries in Mutira pastorate and beyond were closed. Only the Catholic Church remained open at Kerugoya Town. And since every Christian who had not taken oath was being targeted by Mau-Mau fighters, Christians, in turn, took guns, as home guards, to prepare for a major counter attack.¹⁷ It is from that background Isabella Wanjiku converted from Anglican to Catholic church, during the war times, as Catholic church was the only one which was open and had a few of her schools running, especially in Kerugoya Town.

c). Early Teaching Professionals

Another critical profession was teaching. Again, Thomas Meero is the African pioneer in this profession. He led in the construction of Mutira primary school as noted earlier and more importantly, he taught the early pupils alongside the Europeans. Nevertheless, he was professionally a carpenter.

¹⁶Interview with Isabella Wanjiku Githaiga, at her Kandegwa home, Muragara, 6 kilometres from the mission centre 21/11/2011.

¹⁷Interview with Isabella Wanjiku Githaiga

Among the local Africans who pioneered the teaching profession include: Peter Gatangi, Michael Karuga Ngaire, Jeffitha Karimurio, Justin King'uru Karoki and Jason Gathumbi. The first African Head Teacher was Peter Gatheru – 1930-1934. At one stage, he was described by the Rev. Canon Bewes, the missionary in the neighbouring Kabare mission centre as an excellent worker. Of interest to note is that both Michael Karuga Ngaire and Justin King'uru Karoki later joined the provincial administration and became sub-chief and senior chiefs respectively. In other words, the teaching profession was used by the governing authorities as a starting point, especially when recruiting the civil servants. The retired Assistant chief, Joshua Koigu s/o Chief Ndegwa Kimere, however feels that the appointment of chiefs, in particular, stemmed from the people as it is they who proposed to the colonial authorities whom they wanted.¹⁸ Koigu however fails to appreciate that whether people proposed so-and-so, the authorities would always favour trained teachers, and thereby give them first priority, as chiefs or other administrators. Research conducted in the old Mutira pastorate shows that 90% of those who were appointed as administrators were basically teachers by training. This trend continued even after independence, 1963. This shows that ruling authorities have had a soft spot for teachers, especially in administrative matters.

Before 1900, the Kikuyu Nation did not have titles such as Chiefs. In particular, the first Europeans to enter the Kikuyu Nation met Waiyaki wa Hinga as Muthamaki (ideal elder) of the Southern Kikuyus at Dagoretti near the city of Nairobi, around 1890 or thereabout. By 1900, they had fallen and Kinyanjui wa Gathirimu had been installed as a Kikuyu leader with the title of Chief. This trend was later followed all over the Nation as Chiefs Njega wa Gioko, Ndegwa wa Kimere, Karuri, Wangu wa Makeri, Kagai and others could now be heard. To this end, the retired Assistant Chief,

¹⁸Interview with Joshua Koigu Ndegwa at his Kamugoiyo home, near Mununga Tea Factory, on 21st November 2010. The retired Assistant Chief, Joshua Koigu, is the son to the legendary Chief Ndegwa wa Kimere.

Joshua Koigu wa Ndegwa recalls how some cultural practices made it hard for those who were educated in the missionary schools to maintain their Christian faith – as the situation forced them to be polygamists.

In his hey days, Joshua Koigu wa Ndegwa, in particular, displayed a very high level of competence as a local administrator. I remember in 1980s when we were still in Mutira primary school, as pupils, when he and his senior, Chief Erastus Mwai Ngunju, used to attend the morning assemblies. As Koigu spoke to welcome his senior, we wished he could continue talking – as his oratorical prowess far outshone everyone else. He would advice pupils to take education seriously as that was the only form of inheritance which one cannot share with another. Born in 1920, at Kabaru forest, Nyeri district – where Chief Ndegwa Kimere had herds of cattle, Koigu remembers how witchcraft was a big challenge during the missionary era – as the missionary work did not immediately succeed in erasing some practices among the people. He recalls that when Kagai became chief, Ndegwa who was retiring told him that unless he married in his homestead, they could not be friends. In other words, in order to retain the bonds, a retired chief had to marry from the incoming chief or vice versa. It was like taking oath or upholding kinship bonds. To protect one another from witchcraft therefore, chiefs encouraged one another to marry from their respective homes. So Ndegwa told Kagai, “if you don’t marry from my family, I will marry from yours” so that they can be brothers; hence no one could harm the other. This ultimately happened and Kagai took Kamwati daughter of Ndegwa as a second wife.

During those days, any friendship started with oaths of friendship. To this end, Kagai and Ndegwa slaughtered a goat of friendship, took oath and conducted rituals that brought their families together. In such situations, no one would feel jealous of the prosperity of the others’ family and hence bewitch the other. After they ate meat, from the slaughtered goat, together they would swear, on oath, that their respective families will never betray one another. It is from such a background that marriage proposals would come up, in their bid to cement the relationship fully.

If leaders failed to marry from one another's family, it was feared that they would "finish one another" through witchcraft and other evil practices. But again, by becoming a polygamist, a person who was ideo-morally brought up by the Christian missionaries would be seen as deviating from the right doctrine, which upholds monogamy, and thereby returning to the dictatorships of African religious heritage and culture. It is from such a background that the colonial authorities preferred teachers as administrators – as their earlier training could possibly help in educating the masses on key policies or issues.

Mutira Mission

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to consider that by 2010, Kirinyaga Diocese, which covers Kirinyaga West, North, East, South and Central Districts, was just a Deanery within the larger Mount Kenya Diocese – Kirinyaga Rural Deanery, in 1970. As noted above, Mount Kenya East Diocese was carved, from Mount Kenya, in 1975, under the stewardship of Bishop Gitari. In turn, Kirinyaga Deanery came into existence in 1964 when the former Embu Deanery was divided into the Deaneries of Embu and Kirinyaga. Parishes that made up the Kirinyaga Deanery in 1970 were those of Mutira, Kabare, Kerugoya, Kiandangae, Ngirambu and Mwea. The Deanery was under the Rural Dean, the Rev Canon Ezbon Ngaruiya.¹

By 2010, the former Kirinyaga Rural Deanery had developed into a Diocese, the Anglican Diocese of Kirinyaga, which had 7 Archdeaconries (Mutira, Cathedral, Kiandangae, Kabare, Ngirambu, Thiba, and Wang'uru), 102 Parishes, 221 congregations, 213 Priests and Church workers and 70,000 Anglicans.² It had well developed departments such as: Communication, Development, Theological Education by Extension, Sunday School, Girls' and Boys' Brigade, Kenya Anglican Men Association, Mothers Union, Young Mothers Association, By-Faith bookshops, Christian Community Services, Hospital Chaplaincy, Stewardship, Accounts

¹Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya: A Short History of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Mount Kenya (1900-1970)*, (Melbourne: Ridley College, 1970), 60.

²<http://www.ackenya.org/dioceses/kirinyaga.html> (accessed October 2, 2010).

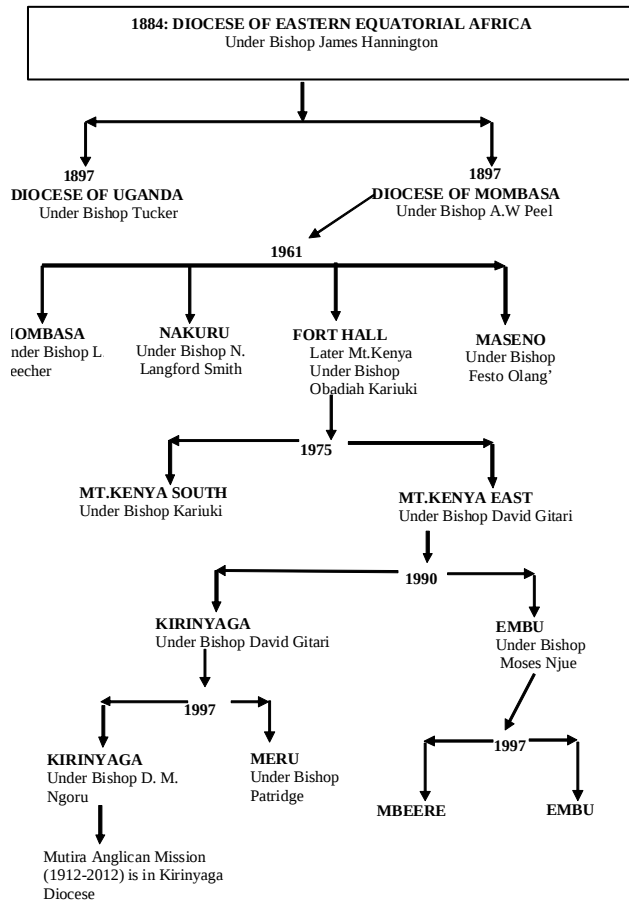
Office, Maranatha SACCO and Youth Department. Similarly, parish which had only one parish in the first half of the twentieth century had a total of 6 Archdeaconries (Karaba in Mbeere Diocese, Mutira, Kiandangae, Kerugoya Cathedral, Thiba and parts of Wang'uru Archdeaconry), about 20 deaneries, about 80 parishes and about 200 congregations.

To paraphrase former Archbishop Gitari description, Mutira Mission Centre grew like a Mustard seed, where it began in a very small way.³ No African clergy; no women ordination, no church buildings; and no solid membership then. One hundred years later (1911-2012), one can have the audacity to look behind and see the far God has taken the locality. From a land that would have gone unnoticed in the annals of history, to a very historical site. From a world that was plagued by ignorance, superstitions, uncertainties, poverty, and disease to one of the places in the world which has highly educated people. Offspring from faithful of the old Mutira Mission has provided Kenya, Africa, and the rest of the world with professors, doctors, lawyers, judges, Administrators, senior political and Ecclesiastical leaders, engineers, historians, and scholars of all shades. Certainly, the once scorned and 'desolate' valleys have finally earned a place in the annals of history! Isn't it the Mustard seed that has grown into a huge tree despite the pains thereof? Surely, "If you have faith as a grain of Mustard seed... nothing will be impossible to you" (Matthew 17:20). As the Psalmist 119:105 thus says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path." Clearly, God's Word illuminates the path of our lives. If we keep God's Word shining along the way, then we will be far less likely to trip. It is only when we turn the light off (before we have actually arrived at our respective destination) that something could spring up in the dark and trips us. May God help us.

³David Gitari, "Bishop's Charge" *The Diocese of Mt. Kenya East*, Sixth Ordinary Session of Synod, Kabare, 7-11 April 1986.

Appendix One

Church Growth 1884-2012



Appendix Two

Anglican Bishops and Primates, 1862-2012

Name	Birth	Death	Major Title	Dates of Primacy
Vincent W. Ryan	1817	1888	1 st Bishop of Mauritius	1862-1872
James Hannington	1847	1885	1 st Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa	1884-1885
Henry P. Parker	1852	1888	2 nd Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa	1886-1888
Alfred R. Tucker	1849	1914	3 rd Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa	1890-1897
William G. Peel	1854	1916	1 st Bishop of Mombasa	1897-1916
Richard S. Heywood	1867	1955	2 nd Bishop of Mombasa	1918-1936
Reginald P. Crabbe	1883	1964	3 rd Bishop of Mombasa	1936-1953
Leonard J. Beecher	21 May 1906	16 Dec 1987	*4 th Bishop of Mombasa *Archbishop of East Africa	*1953-1960 *1960-1970
Festo H. Olang'	1914	3 Feb 2004	1 st Archbishop of Kenya	1970-1980
Manases Kuria	July 22, 1929	Sept 2005	2 nd Archbishop of Kenya	1980-1994
David Gitari	1937	-	3 rd Archbishop of Kenya	1997-2002
Benjamin Nzimbi	1944	-	4 th Archbishop of Kenya	2003-2009
Eliud Wabukala	1952	-	5 th Archbishop of Kenya	2009-

Appendix Three

Establishment of Churches in Mutira Pastorate

Kiamuthambi	1919
Kiburu	1920
Karima-ini	1921
Kiini	1922
Kiburu	1920
Kiamaina	1922
Kathuuri	1922
Kagio	1923
Baricho	1923
Kombo-ini	1936
Mukinduri	1939
Kamuiru	1940
Riakanau	1942
Mutitu	1954
Kabonge	1955
Gacaru	1960
Ndiriti	1966
Kerugoya	1970
Getuya	1971
Kiarugu	1976
Kagumo	1976
Kiganda	2009

Appendix Four

African Clergy in Mutira Mission

Rev. Johana Njumbi	1934 to 1952
Rev. Nathaniel Gacira	1952 to 1954
Rev. Paul Kibuti	1955 to 1958
Rev. Johana Muturi	1958 to 1965
Rev. Joseph N. Mwangi	1965 to 1966
Rev. Joesph Kangangi	1966 to 1970
Rev. Zakaria N. Karani	1971 – 1975
Rev. Godfrey Ngigi Ndirima	1976 April to 1978
Rev. Peter Karanja Njoroge	1980 to 1981
Rev. Rowland Warui	1982
Rev. Fredrick Ngari	1983
Rev. Elphas J. Njiru Macharia	1984 - 1986
Rev. Stephen Gakuru	1987 - 1988
Rev. Daniel Munene Ngoru	1989
Rev. Fredrick Mutugi	1990
Rev. Canon Ephantus Njogu	1991
Rev. Canon Jeremiah Njogu Mugo	1992-1996.
Ven. Johnson Marichu	1997 – 2002
Ven. John Kangangi	2003
Rev. Daniel Mbogo Njogu	2004
Rev. Evans Karaya Kariuki	2005
Ven. Francis S.G. Mwai	2006 (Jan. - Aug)
Ven. Ephantus Muriuki	2006 (Aug. – Dec)
Ven. Francis S.G. Mwai	2007–2010
Ven. Julius Njogu	2011

Appendix Five

Some Outstanding Lay Leaders

Stephen Kisilu	Riakanau
Henry Kuruga Mugi	Kabonge
Gerishon Matiti	Kiamuthambi
Thomas Meero	Mutira
Lay Canon James Njogu Mabu	Kagumo
Lay Canon James Mathenge	Kabonge/Mutira
Lay Canon Joel Gatungo	Kerugoya
Jason Gathumbi	Mutira
Peter Gatheru	Mutira
Erastus Mwai Ngunju	Kamuiru
Gerishon Kibugi, Gordon Kariti & Gardi Macaria	Karaini
Samuel Gakuya	Gatwe
Samuel Gicoya	Kiamaina
Charles Muraguri	Mutuma
Moses Gachimu and Edward Nguu	Karimaini
David Gaciraini	Kiandangae
Elijah Kimani, Harun Maina, Phinehas Wang'ombe	Kiandangae
Zakayo Nguba, Joseph Kanyoro, Erasto Kanama	Kiandangae
Njeru Githae, and Paul Kibuto	Kiandangae
Amos Kathigo, Daniel Gathiomi	Kerugoya
Henry Karani, Charles Nderi	Kerugoya
Mrs Josephine Wamwetha	Kerugoya
Andrea Njogu, John Gacoki	Kerugoya
Gerishon Mboi and Bernard Ngari	Kerugoya
Elishah Gatuna, Stephen Musyimi Kisilu	Mwea/Karaba
Joseph Githui, Zablon Gathogo	Mwea
Phares Muhia, Reuben Ngumbe	Mwea
Wilson Mwaura, Earnest Mathenge	Mwea
Frederick Karaya, Micah Muciga	Mwea
Mrs Alice Muasa, Francis Gicuki	Mwea
Chief Joel Karubiu, Moses Kariuki	Mwea
Samuel Ngige, and Alam Mugo	Mwea

Appendix Six

Kikuyu Anglican Clergy From 1920 to 1945

No.	Name	Home Pastorate	Years of Ordination
1.	Paul Mbatia	Weithaga	1920
2.	Samuel Nguru	Kiambaa	1924
3.	Livai Gachanja	Kahuhia	1924
4.	Shadrack Mliwa	Weithaga (ex Taita)	1924
5.	Yusufu Magu	Kabete	1925
6.	Musa Mumai	Kabare	1929
7.	Johana Muturi	Kigari	1929
8.	Elijah Gachanja	Njumbi	1929
9.	Johana Njumbi	Mutira	1934
10.	Reuben Karanja	Kabete	1934
11.	Nathaniel Gachira	Kahuhia	1934
12.	Musa Njiru	Kigari	1934
13.	Joseph Ngarachu	Weithaga	1934
14.	Petro Kigonde	Weithaga	1937
15.	Obadiah Kariuki	Kiambaa	1939
16.	Obadiah Mwangi	Weithaga	1939
17.	Ezbon Ngaruiya	Kahumbu	1943
18.	Felix Nyoro	Gathukeine	1943
19.	Herbert ndwiga	Karungu	1943
20.	Gideon Githae	Mutira	1943
21.	Felix Kaara	Njumbi	1943
22.	Josiah Magu	Kabete	1945

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The Author



Dr. Julius Gathogo, (PhD), is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Kenyatta University, Kenya.

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ISBN 978-9966-1506-8-4

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